

THE SUPREME TEST.

There are friends who come in when black sorrow's your guest,
To weep with you over your dead;
Friends who seem, in the midst of your heartache's unrest,
To know just what ought to be said,
But the friends of them all, when grim trouble stalks by,
And your heart can do nothing but bleed,
Is the fellow who comes when there's no one else nigh.
And whispers: "How much do you need?"

Father, terribly bless all the friends I have known
Who came in the depths of my woe,
Just to stand by my side when I felt so alone
That I might their sympathy know;
O I love every one for each handclasp and tear,
And ay shall I wish them godspeed;
But a crown for the one who, when none else was near,
Said softly: "How much do you need?"
—S. W. Gillian, in Los Angeles Herald.

"He Turned Her Picture Toward the Wall."

By Horace Eaton Walker.

WHAT I am about to relate occurred a number of years ago, a short time after that popular song, "He Turned Her Picture Toward the Wall," came out. I was then living at Branton, our family consisting of myself, my wife and two children, Mattie, aged fifteen, and George, aged seventeen. We possessed an organ upon which my daughter played, George singing, and Mrs. Wilters and myself coming in on the chorus in regular country fashion.

I was the musical enthusiast of the family, and while I did not like all the songs then extant, when one did strike me I immediately mastered it. I went into ecstasies over this particular song, and whistled it in the woodshed, hummed it in the parlor, sang it to visitors, neighbors and friends. Many of these took the fever; but mine was especially malignant, and the song haunted me for weeks after everybody else had caught onto something new.

My wife casually mentioned an asylum for lunatics several times a day. But I still repeated the song, the first thing on rising in the morning, and the last thing on retiring at night. Then she expostulated and ventured to hope that no more popular songs would come out for at least a year. I realized that my state was becoming alarming. Something must be done, and immediately.

"Mrs. Wilters," I said, "the thing shall be stopped."

"But how, dear?" she queried wearily.

"I shall lock up the organ."

Which I did; but the song still ran in my head. At last I collapsed. I was ill from an overdose of music. The doctor said I would recuperate after a few days of rest, but upon my becoming convalescent I must refrain from all music; I must not even sing "Yankee Doodle," "Ben Holt," or "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Right in the midst of this mental tribulation something happened. Mrs. Wilters staggered into my bedroom one morning, her eyes as large as saucers, and exclaimed:

"Sam Wilters, every picture in the parlor is turned to the wall!"

"Yes," chimed in George, "and the organ is unlocked!"

"And pa," added Mattie, "the organ stops are open where you play, 'He Turned Her Picture!'"

Instead of throwing me into a mental fever, this information did the reverse. It broke up the musical trend of my thoughts.

"Reverse every picture," I commanded. "Lock the organ and fetch the key to me."

I was obeyed. Then I said:

"George, go and fetch my gun from the attic."

"Oh!" gasped my wife.

"Yes, I will sit here in bed, armed, and at the first approach of danger, leap from it and shoot the person who is perpetrating this joke."

"But you are too sick to think of anything of the khad," expostulated my wife.

"I shall need only a step from the bed and fire. Pity if I cannot sing a popular song! We'll see about it."

"It will be murder," said Mattie, with tearful eyes.

"In the first degree, too," cried George, severely.

"It won't be murder! It'll simply be defense against a burglar. See?"

They all saw; and as I was master of the house and thoroughly aroused to the situation, it was decided that I should go on picket duty that night.

"Mrs. Wilters, you will retire to the chamber above," I ordered at bedtime. "And, Mattie, you can accompany your mother. As for you, George, get a club from the woodshed and become a sort of body guard to me."

As night set in the darkness of the rooms became intense. Not a flicker of light anywhere; just total darkness. George sat in the parlor behind a case of books containing poetry, prose and enough dictionaries to scare an ordinary burglar out of his wits. I sat bolt upright in bed, my back resting against the headboard, my trusty gun in my hands.

The clock struck one, two, three. The sound of the bell had scarcely ceased when a loud noise came to my ears. Striking a match, I peeped into the room where George was sitting. He was fast asleep and his falling club had awakened me. I lighted the lamp and stared at the pictures.

"George!" I shouted.

"What, father?" he cried, starting from his chair.

"See!" He staggered back. All the pictures were again turned toward the wall, the organ was unlocked and my favorite stops were out!

George stared at me. I stared at George.

"What does it mean, dad?"

"You slept!"

"But you were on guard?"

"Yes."

"And did you sleep?"

"I think not."

"How came you here, then?"

"The falling of your club aroused me."

"From sleep?"

"Perhaps."

Mattie and her mother soon arrived on the scene, but none of us could offer a solution to the mystery.

Daylight came. The organ stops were replaced, the organ relocked, and every picture righted. The next night Mrs. Wilters and myself were to go on guard, she to remain in the parlor, as George had done the night previously, and I in bed, as I was not quite strong enough yet to remain up.

At midnight the house was again quiet. Mrs. Wilters on guard. I heard the clock struck twelve, then one, and—

My hair stood on end. A scream came from the parlor. Hastily lighting a lamp, I beheld Mrs. Wilters standing in a corner, swinging the club frantically, and screaming.

"Eleanor, what in Heaven's name are you doing?"

"You nearly frightened me to death!" she gasped.

"I?"

"What did you fire at?"

I had discharged the gun and it lay smoking against the footboard, the bureau looking glass having a round hole through it.

"Did I fire?"

"Did you? Mr. Wilters, to-morrow night Mattie shall be on guard, and neither you nor your gun can frighten her!"

"Great Heaven, see!"

Every picture was again turned toward the wall and the organ was open.

"Eleanor, what mystery is this?"

My wife was speechless. Just at that instant George and Mattie appeared. "Father, we will try it to-morrow night, and failing, we'll call in the police to watch for us," George said, when the situation had been explained.

And so once more the pictures were turned back.

"I prefer a revolver to a club," Mattie said stoutly.

Thus armed we again awaited events. Singular that I should hear the clock striking every night toward morning! But so it was. It struck twelve, then one, then two, and—

I leaped from bed. Mattie was firing her revolver rapidly, the light revealing her in an attitude of despair.

"Well, Mattie, what have you hit?" "Nothing," she said doggedly, throwing her smoking revolver into a corner.

"Oh, yes you have! You've shot four holes through my new oil painting, costing five hundred dollars. One hole in the perspective, one in the background, two through the mountain. Good! Just one hundred and twenty-five dollars a shot. Mattie, you'll do."

As we came back to a normal condition of mind we found that the pictures had been reversed as before.

"It is terrible!" said Mattie.

"But why did you shoot?"

"I heard footsteps."

"Whose?"

"I do not know."

"Leave me to watch to-morrow night, said my wife, determinedly.

"Well and good; we will!" I answered.

When the fatal hour came Mrs. Wilters commanded:

"Mr. Wilters, you will now retire as usual."

I retired gun in hand.

"George—Mattie—your father has gone to bed. Come."

The three left the room, going to the spare chambers above. What it meant I had no means of knowing at the time, but it all came out afterward. When I fell asleep they returned to the sitting room, each holding a revolver and a dark lantern. Mrs. Wilters was at the head of the undertaking, her idea being to dash the bull's eyes full upon the parlor adjoining at the slightest noise, and should a person be discovered tampering with the organ or pictures, to shoot him.

As usual I heard the clock strike twelve, one, two, and— The next I knew the parlor was suddenly illuminated, and crack! crack! crack! went the three revolvers. They had surprised the man in the very act of displacing the pictures, and after firing excitedly, rushed into the room.

"Great Heavens!" cried my wife, fainting and falling.

"Are you hurt?" gasped George.

"We have shot father!" screamed Mattie, springing forward and clasping her in arms.

Matters were soon righted, but I badly frightened to shoot straight I should not be telling this story. It is all explained by the fact that I was a somnambulist, and did these things in my sleep.—Waverley.

The Elephant's Teeth.

An elephant has only eight teeth altogether. At fourteen years the elephant loses its first set of teeth and a new set grows.

When a baby stops crying the old bachelor thinks something must be the matter with it.

FROM ANOTHER WORLD.

An English Officer Warned Against Death.

An English girl was engaged to be married to a young American who had been a student abroad. They had met at Heidelberg. He died suddenly after returning to this country. She came over here shortly afterward to visit his mother. While in New York she went to a medium. There was no appointment beforehand and there was no way by which the psychic could know who she was. Taking her turn, she sat down by the medium, who went into a trance and began to speak. Immediately the girl's lover claimed to be present. He told her some things which only they two had ever known. He recalled circumstances connected with their acquaintances abroad. Now, it so happened that this young lady's father was an English officer in the war in South Africa. Among other things which the young man told was this: He said: "I am glad that I have been able to save your father's life once or twice during the past summer."

Now comes the strange coincidence, if coincidence it be. The father writes home from South Africa, being entirely ignorant of all that has taken place here, and relates what seems to him somewhat remarkable fact. He tells how he was sitting in his tent one day when there came upon him suddenly an unaccountable impression that he was in danger. It was as though some one were trying to make him feel this and induce him to move. So strong was the feeling that he got up and went over to the other side of his tent. He had hardly done this before a shell struck the chair where he had been sitting. Had he remained there he would have been instantly killed. Of course, it is not asserted that this is anything more than a coincidence; but the suggestion is made that coincidences of this sort have been so very frequent as to make one wonder as to whether there is not some deeper meaning in it all.—Minot J. Savage, in Ainslee's Magazine.

Whence Comes Electricity?

At a time when electricity is rapidly transforming the face of the globe, when it has already in great measure annihilated distance and bids fair to abolish darkness for us, it is curious to notice how completely ignorant "the plain man" remains as to the later developments of electrical theory. Some recent correspondence has led me to think that a vague notion that electricity is a fluid which in some mysterious way flows through a telegraph wire like water through a pipe, is about as far as he has got; and if we add to this some knowledge of what he calls "electric shocks," we should probably exhaust his ideas on the subject. Yet this is not to be wondered at. Even the most instructed physicists can do nothing but guess what electricity is, and the only point on which they agree is as to what it is not. There is, in fact, a perfect consensus of opinion among scientific writers that it is not a fluid, i.e., a continuous stream of ponderable matter, as is liquid or a gas; and that it is not a form of energy, as is heat. Outside this limit the scientific imagination is at liberty to roam where it listeth, and although it has used this liberty to a considerable extent, no definite result has followed up to the present time.—The Academy.

The Fish of Bermuda.

There is a great green "parrot-fish" of Bermuda, as brilliant in color as his namesake the bird, showing himself boldly, and swimming along slowly, secure from any assault. His scales are green as the fresh grass of springtime, and each one is bordered by a pale-brown line. His fins are pink, and the end of the tail is banded with nearly every color of the rainbow. He is showy, but this showiness serves him a good purpose. His flesh is bitter and poisonous to man, and probably so to other fishes as well, and they let him well alone, for they can recognize him afar off, thanks to his gaudy dress.

Underneath the parrot, lying on the bottom, is a "pink hind." You notice him, and as the parrot passes over him he suddenly changes to bright scarlet, and as quickly resumes his former faint color. Had the parrot been looking for his dinner, and thought the hind would make a good first course, this sudden change of color might have scared him off, just as the sudden bristling of a cat makes a dog change his mind. When the hind is disturbed at night he gives out dashes of light to startle the intruder, and send him away in a fright.—St. Nicholas.

Fresh Meat From Uruguay.

According to the report of United States Consul Albert W. Swalm, at Montevideo, the exports of fresh meat from the River Plate show a steady increase. Nearly two years ago the export of live stock from the River Plate to Europe was embargoed by reason of the foot and mouth disease, and while the disease has disappeared the quarantine remains. This has caused a marked development of the refrigerated beef industry, so that three lines of steamers, including the Royal Mail Packets, have been fitted to carry beef in quarters to the English markets.

These beef exports, up to October 1, 1901, have amounted to 347,924 quarters, as against 143,859 for the same period of 1900. During the same nine months 1,030,642 frozen sheep were exported to Europe. The River Plate can easily furnish from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 quarters of beef for export.

The cattle used for the trade cost an average of \$23 to \$30 gold per head at the killing market. The best sheep for freezing cost an average of \$3 per head.

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OUR BUDGET OF HUMOR.

Will Raise Her One.

The cat that nightly haunts our gate— How heartily we hate her! Some night she'll find new till late, But we will mut-tate her!

—San Antonio Express.

A Rarity.

She—"I should like to have a coin dated the year of my birth."

He (a collector)—"With enthusiasm"—

"Yes. It would indeed be valuable."

The Sketch.

Relieving Mamma's Mind.

"Mamma, my governess says cosmetics hurt a person's complexion."

"Well! The idea!"

"Oh! But she said they wouldn't hurt yours, mamma!"—Puck.

Stupidity Personified.

"Stupid?"

"I should say so! Last night I turned the gas down, and he asked me if it was time for him to go home."—Detroit Free Press.

The Business Maid.

"Did she hold out any encouragement?"

"She said she'd take my offer under advisement and drop me a line as soon as she was convinced it was the best she could do."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Demand For Transparency.

"At this point," said the author, "the plot thickens."

"Don't let us do that!" protested the manager. "Thin it out. If there's anything that annoys the public it's a plot that can't be seen through at a glance."

—Washington Star.

A Sincere Affection.

"Do you think that titled suitor's affections are sincere?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Cumrox, "to some extent his affections are undoubtedly sincere. I never knew a man who loved money more devotedly than he does."—Washington Star.

Another Strike Averted.

Mr. Mann—"If you were not my brother-in-law I would punch your head off!"

Mrs. Mann—"John, don't you dare hit my brother!"

Mr. Mann—"And if I were not your brother-in-law I'd wipe up the floor with you!"

Mrs. Mann—"Frank, don't you dare strike my husband?"—Chelsea (Mass.) Gazette.

Didn't Want to Sit There.

The little three-year-old daughter of one of the leading ministers in Little Rock resents too great familiarity. A few evenings ago, though she seemed a little unwilling, a young man who was calling took her upon his lap, whereupon she said with great gravity:

"I want to sit in my own lap."

It is needless to add that the young man immediately put her down.—Trained Motherhood.

A Way Old Acquaintances Have.

"It is too bad," said the visitor from home, "but people who acquire wealth are not the same to their old friends."

"Perhaps there is a reason for that," replied Mrs. Cumrox, reminiscently.

"People who acquire wealth have feelings the same as any one else, and their old friends sometimes have a very superior way of saying, 'Humph! I knew them when they were as poor as Job's turkey!'"—Washington Star.

An Enthusiast.

<img alt="A cartoon illustration of a man with a very large head and a small body, sitting at a desk and writing in a book.