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Select Poetry.

DOT STUPPORN PONY.

Mit bier I growt so heffy
Dot too much the walkin' pe;
So I pyed me of von pony,
But dot pettler he sheat me,
Bote eyes of him vas limpy,
Bote leeks of him vas pilnd;
But dot vot broke of me mine heart
Dot pony vas onkind.

He keek just like a stupporn mule,
Oop, town, pe fore, behind,
Und how I eue dot pony
I rolt oop in my mind,
Dot sympatee vas nonsense;
Shust eferydinks he break;
Ven suttien koomed von grand itee,
I tole you how I make.

I heetech him mit de shafters,
But, outside in, inster,
His het oop py dot wagon,
His dall where vas his het,
Den—ooh, doo, tree—I schlag him,
Ach, Himmel, how he keek!
But ven he find he noddings stroock,
He stopp dot poety queeck.

Den looks he opp astoundet,
Oxited poety bad;
Den suttien makes he packwards
Like as of he vas mat.
I laugh as of I vas tying
Ven I see him go dot vay;
Den on his haunch he stoomples town,
As he vas going to bray.

How shamet he look, vateffer!
I tole him vot I dinks;
Doo dears drop out his eyepals,
Mit krief his dall he vinks,
Aroundt all ride I toorn him,
His hat before him now,
Und streeks—he trives as goot und kind
As he vas been mine frau!

A TRYING SITUATION.

MANY years back, a young man came out of a little house at the eastern end of a town by the sea. There was plenty of life and gaiety at the other end of the town, which was livened by one or two barracks, a fort and a castle. But the eastern end was very poor, and would have been quite lonesome but for the fishermen and their boats. The house from which the young man came was beyond even this homely bustle, and was little more than a wooden hut tarred to defend it from wind and weather.

But the young man who came out was in the full dress of a military officer, though that was screened from a first view by the long gray cloak that the wild March wind made so necessary.

He was young, and his face was finely cut, and would have been pleasant but for a look of stern and painful sorrow, not unmixed with bitterness, which seemed strangely incongruous with his years and his dress.

He walked on quite through the town. Whenever the houses broke apart one caught the glimpse of a wild, flat country, dotted here and there with weird trees in Indian file; and the youth looked wistfully towards these desert fields, as if he would fain have struck away across them instead of going on, as he did toward the grim old fort.

Yet there, it was clear, festivity was going forward; and friendly voices greeted him as he passed the gray old portal. And then, over his sad, stern face he dropped a mask of gaiety, and though he relapsed into silence at times, he was as polite and conversable as the best of them.

There was a preparation for a dinner-party in the fine, stiff, old hall, with its rows of military portraits, and its dingy, blood-stained banners. The castle, the barracks, and the fort itself, had eagerly furnished guests to welcome the visitor of the day, a grand old general recently returned from honorable victories in the south of Europe.

After dinner, when ceremony was

fairly thawed, the good old general, in the kindness and pride of his heart displayed a little box, which had been given to him by some grandee of Spain. I think it must have been too small for a snuff-box, and was probably one of those tiny trifles in which fashionable folks used to carry comfits and lozenges. At any rate this box was set with diamonds and colored gems of rare value, and as it passed from hand to hand, flashing brightly in the lamplight, while the old warrior told dread stories of campaigns and of the daring and honor of his men.

But suddenly, at the end of a story so thrilling that all heads had been craned toward him, while the military servants had thronged the door in rapt attention, the simple question was asked:

"Where is the general's jeweled box?"

Nobody knew; everybody said he had silently passed it on to his fellow.

The general began to rummage his own pockets, lest it had found its way back to him, and he had half-unconsciously put it away. No, it was not there, and the brave old fighting face looked a little blank, as he murmured an excuse about "how the loss would vex Lady Elizabeth."

"But it cannot be lost, general," said the officer in command of the fort. "In this room it was but a few minutes ago, and in this room it must be still. Let the servants at the door come in; though, to the best of my belief, not one of them has approached the table since the box was brought out. Let the door be made fast, and let our search be thorough."

The candles were brandished to and fro, under the tables, under the chairs, round the table drapery. But from no point flashed out the brilliant beauty of the little box.

"Still it must be here," insisted the commandant, "and surely no gentleman will think his honor infringed if each in turn is asked to empty out his pockets upon the table. I myself will be the first to do so. And the servants shall be the last."

Nobody could be expected to demur at so simple and sensible a proposal, backed as it was by the honest old officer instantly rattling out some crown pieces, and a tobacco pouch, half pence, and an old pipe. One after another, the gentlemen on either side of the table followed his example, while sharp but not unfriendly eyes took eager note of strange pieces of personal property, and of dainty three-cornered notes, which might serve in the future as material for badinage and quizzing.

But one drew back when the commandant made his proposal. The young man who had walked in from the eastern end of the town dropped suddenly into his seat whence he had risen in the first eagerness of the search. He passed his hand once or twice through his hair, leaving it wild and straggling. And then he watched blankly, as the fruitless search drew nearer and nearer to himself. Within five minutes one or two officers were whispering to each other that most any simpleton might have seen he did not expect it to be found.

His turn was the very last. "Ensign Ranson," said the commandant, steadily. Ensign Ranson was certainly the first who required to be called upon by name.

The youth arose, and, though the rest of his face was deadly whiteness, there was a spot of burning red on his cheek.

"I do not think any gentleman should be asked to do this," he said. "I will give my word of honor that the box is not upon my person. I did not keep it in my hands even for a moment; I merely took it and passed it on."

"Too high-minded even to look at such gewgaws," sneered a spiteful old major under his breath.

"What men high in the service and old enough to be his father have already done, Ensign Ranson may safely do also," said the commandant, with a severity which was not unkindly, for young Ranson looked such a boy among the crowd of men, mostly stout and middle-aged; and the very suspicion suddenly lowering over him made the old officer think of his own lads, growing up and not quite sure to do well for themselves after all.

"I would never have asked it for the

sake of my box," observed the general, leaning back in his chair, and inwardly wondering what Lady Elizabeth would say of his carelessness.

"But we asked it for the sake of our honor, general," said the commandant, testily.

"And we do not seem to have asked it needlessly," whispered the spiteful major.

"I will not do this thing!" cried the young ensign, passionately; and he looked wildly around the group as if he sought for one face that would comprehend and compassionate his misery.—The face that looked the kindest was that of the old general himself, partly because it was not his hospitality that was outraged, partly because his genial nature was terribly shocked at finding anything of his the cause of such a wretched act of dishonor.

"If the general will come with me to the ante-room," said the young man, "I will convince him that I have barely touched his box. But this public exposure I will not submit to; our consent was not asked and?"

"Certainly not!" "Out upon you!" "General, you must not think of indulging his insolent request," were the only sentences audible in the general hubbub that rose on all sides.

But the general rose: "Gentlemen," he said quietly, "I've never yet refused to listen to an enemy's petition. If you can satisfy me, sir, perhaps your comrades will take my word for you."

There was a murmur of very reluctant acquiescence, as the ensign bowed and waited respectfully to follow the general to the ante-chamber. They had not disappeared behind the heavy curtains before all sorts of surmises were whispered around the table, guesses and hints so wild and so sinister as to do credit neither to the heads nor hearts which originated them. The general and ensign stayed a longer time in the ante-room than would have sufficed to search the ensign's pockets twice and twice over. Not a sound could be heard. If any conversation was going forward, it must have been in a very low voice.—The two gentlemen were away for nearly half an hour. All the military servants had been subjected to the commandant's rigid scrutiny, and then dismissed. It might be as well that none "but the gentlemen of the regiment" should know exactly what the end was. The delay grew first awkward and then awful. Even the whispers and rumors flagged into an intense and excited watching.

At last the general and the ensign came out. The ensign's face was still very pale; what flush remained upon it had now mounted to the eyes. The old general was blowing his nose.

"Ensign Ranson has thoroughly satisfied me," he said, in his most gentle voice. Never mind my box. It has vanished by one of those mysterious accidents that will happen sometimes.—It will be found some day. And now, gentlemen, perhaps as we have been thus broken up we shall not settle down again very comfortably to-night. I hope we shall see you all at the castle before Lady Elizabeth and I leave for London."

"General," said the commandant, drawing him a little to one side, "may I sincerely trust your great generosity has not led you to—"

"Sir," cried the old general, "can you imagine that any mistaken idea of kindness would cause me to make you a companion of thieves? Gentlemen," he went on, seeing that the company were not aware of this little by-play.—"I pledge you my word that I am satisfied of Ensign Ranson's honor; and whoever dares to doubt him makes me to be his accomplice."

And the old general seized the young ensign's arm and marched with him from the banqueting-room, while every one sat dumfounded, till the spiteful major remarked that wonders would never cease.

There was nothing more to be said. It was discovered that Ensign Ranson was not only invited to the castle with the other officers, but was also asked there by himself and actually was believed to have taken tea with the general and Lady Elizabeth in their deepest retirement. For the general's sake, rather than his own, his brother officer's continued on courteous terms with him;

and he had always been shy, and held himself so aloof, that perhaps he did not discover there was but little cordiality in their courtesy. And presently he exchanged into another regiment, which went on foreign service.

He was away for several years, and in the fortunes of war he got rapidly promoted, so that when he returned home, though he was still young, he was no longer a poor nobody.

When he landed in his own country he found a letter awaiting him, written by one who had sat near him at that memorable dinner party, and who was now residing in the old castle where the general and Lady Elizabeth had been guests. This letter pressed him, in the warmest terms, to spend some of his earliest days in England at this very castle, and to give many old friends who were in the neighborhood an opportunity of meeting and congratulating him. Ensign Ranson, now Colonel Ranson, smiled a little strangely when he read his invitation, but he wrote a very polite reply and accepted it.

Once more he sat in the stately old banquet-room of the fort. This time he had not walked in from the bleakest end of the town, but had been taken from the castle in the chariot of the castle owner. But as he took his seat in the chair of honor, he noticed that every face at the table was, in all its changes, familiar to him. All of the guests at the former dinner were not there. Many of those, indeed, he well knew, were sleeping on battle-fields far away. But nobody was at this dinner who had not been at the other one.

Once more the dishes were removed and the servants withdrawn. The guest of this evening was no wonderful storyteller, like the good old general, who has now passed to his rest. Colonel Ranson was as taciturn as Ensign Ranson was shy, and he even let the conversation flag and never seemed to notice it.

"Colonel," said the eldest gentleman of the party, speaking with visible effort, and giving a slight cough, to veil his embarrassment, "Colonel, I think we all remember another time when we dined together here."

"Certainly; I remember it," answered the Colonel, lifting his gray eyes with a cool light in them.

"Colonel, we fancy you think some of us did you ill-justice then. At least a lady says you felt so—Lady Elizabeth, the good old general's widow. If what we are going to do is in any way painful to you, I hope you will pardon us, for we are only following her counsel. Colonel, there was a box lost that evening. Here it is."

Yes, there it was, gleaming once more in the light which danced gaily upon it. The Colonel looked at it calmly, and asked:

"Where was it found?" His composure was exceedingly disconcerting. Another gentleman, feeling that the first had done his part, now took up the parable.

"It was found in the very chair in which you are now seated, colonel," he said. "You will remember that the general sat there on that night. It must have found its way back to the general's own hand, and in the interest and excitement of his story telling he must have intended to slip it back into his pocket, which, if you recollect, was the first place where he sought it. Instead of that, it evidently escaped the proper orifice and dropped into the covering of the chair, that covering was very thick and heavy, and hung in laps about its legs. Part of it was unsewn, and this box dropped between the damask and the lining and remained there safely and unseen, till the chair was recovered last year."

"Gentleman," said the colonel, with his accustomed calmness, though his lips trembled a little, "I cannot wonder if some of you thought my conduct suspicious. I thank you heartily for showing me your brotherly delight that those suspicions were unfounded."

At the bottom of the table sat the spiteful old major (he was on half-pay now, and more spiteful than ever) and he thought within himself that there was no telling whether Ensign Ranson had not taken some subsequent opportunity of getting rid of his dangerous booty into the hole in the damask, and that mystery could not be cleared up, unless the colonel had explained why he had demurred to the search.—

And this spiteful old major would have said as much to his next neighbor, if he himself had not been so terrible deaf that he could not regulate his own voice between a confidential whisper and a mighty shout.

The colonel sat in silence for some minutes. Then he recalled himself with a start, and drawing something from his pocket, said quietly:

"Gentlemen, I, too, have something to show you."

All pressed forward as he carefully unfolded the soft paper packet and laid something on the table. What was it? What could it be?

It was a bleached skeleton of a chicken's wing.

"Gentlemen," he said in that same quiet voice, which no longer sounded cold and stern, but rather full of strength and sweetness, "when I was here before, I was a poor, fatherless lad, owning nothing in the world but my poor little pittance of pay. I fear I was an eyesore to some of you. I think you felt my appearance did not do justice to the dignity of our regiment. I believe I often looked rather shabby, but really I could not help it."

"I had only one relation in the world, and that was my mother's sister. After my mother died she had been as a mother to me, but when our home was finally broken up, there was nothing for it but she must be a governess in a stranger's house. And she did her work courageously and cheerfully enough, till her health failed, and nobody wanted the service of a sick woman."

"She had always been good to me, and we two had only each other in the world. I could not help her as she ought to have been helped, but my pay would at least provide her such a maintenance as a poor workman can give to a poor working woman."

"I took my aunt to lodge with the wife of the miller's man, in the little black cottage beside the mill. She was a very kind, cleanly woman, though rough and plain in her ways; and my poor aunt used to call herself very happy there. But she could not eat the simple food my scanty means could procure. And the good landlady used to break my heart by suggesting that her appetite might be tempted by chicken or game, or such luxuries beyond my utmost reach."

"All the day of that memorable dinner-party my aunt had been very feeble and failing. When I left her I really wondered whether she would be alive when I saw her again. My soul revolted at the sight of dainties that were no good to me, and which I could not convey to her who seemed dying for want of them. Suddenly a bright idea seized me. I took a letter from my pocket and spread it on my napkin, and then, by an adroit movement, transferred a wing of a chicken from my plate to the paper, and thence smuggled it to my pocket."

The listening guests began to look at each other with enlightened eyes. The spiteful old major felt that a very full explanation was being given—and he was glad he was deaf, and need not hear it.

"Gentlemen you can all imagine my feelings when such unlooked-for circumstances threatened to expose my poor plan. Gentlemen, there are some of you who were, like myself, young then; whom it would have been as hard to meet, after such a discovery, as it would have been had I really stolen the jewels."

"Heaven forgive us, Ranson; but I can't say you are wrong," said one brave gentleman, who had been a fashionable dandy in those days, but who has a wife and six children now.

"Gentleman, I did not fear the old man, honored and enriched by a grateful country. The men who had fought the best battles of life have a pitiful respect for the poor and friendless. To him I could lay bare my poor little secret. But my place then was among the young, who, having never conquered, always despised the defeated—the vain giddy youths, extravagant with their fathers' money, and—"

"Oh, come, Ranson," cried one officer, "it is your turn now, with a vengeance. Please to remember that to-night we are the abject and defeated—and be merciful!"

The Colonel laughed. And they could not tell whether it was good faith or subtle irony that he rejoined, "You are right," and then went on:

"In the little room yonder, I told my sad story to that good man who is gone. And I folded up my queer treasure again for I could not leave it behind to bear witness; and, besides, having paid such a terrible price for it. And she ate it for her supper that very night; and next morning, almost as soon as it was light, there was the general hammering at the cottage door with a basket of fowls and fruit carried in his own hand. And, then and there, I took this little chicken bone, and vowed that I would keep it till the snuff-box be found, and I myself was such a man among men that none would smile at my poverty, or even despise my weakness."