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Select Poetry.

AT THE OPEN GATE.

BY M. EDITH YOST.

When the twilight shades were gathered,
And the evening star was bright,
Just between the hour of sunset
And the darker hours of night,
Homeward coming from the city,
From the city coming late,
Every evening—who would meet me—
Greet me at the open gate?

When the day's hard toil was over,
And I left the smoky town,
Left the hard-paved streets and clamor,
For my quite country home;
Left all work and cares behind me,
Homeward turning—tho' 'twas late—
Sure to find there in the gloaming—
Some one at the open gate.

Standing where the vines of summer
Climbed the dear old-fashioned fence,
Eager listening for my footsteps,
Turning oft in half suspense.
Ah, to me, the sweetest pleasure
When on coming home so late,
I would find her watching, waiting,
Standing at the open gate.

Many a summer twilight found us
Lingering, whispering, soft and low;
Lovers still, tho' long united,
Mourning not some "Long ago,"
Happy hours! the glad home-coming!
She was there, e'en tho' 'twas late;
Banish all the day's ill humor!
Some one's at the open gate.

Many a year has gone since Mary,
In the twilight, used to come
Down the lane and through the shadow
Watching for my coming home.
Some one else—a little darling—
Fair haired, blue eyed, now will wait,
Calling "Papa, papa, hurry!"
Swinging on the open gate.

Sometimes—somewhere—I shall see her,
I shall find my love again;
Sleeping not amongst the flowers,
Where so long her form has lain,
But beyond the twilight shadows,
Sure my darling there will wait,
Watching for the long home-coming
Just inside the Heavenly Gate.

Select Story.

THE LADY PENELOPE.

In going out of Casterbridge by a low-lying road which eventually conducts to the town of Ivell, you see on the right hand an ivied manor house, flanked by battlemented towers, and more than usually distinguished by the size of its many-mullioned windows. Though still of good capacity, the building is much reduced from its original grand proportions; it has, moreover, been shorn of the fair estate which once appertained to it, with the exception of a few acres of park land immediately around the mansion. This was formerly the ancient and knightly family of the Drenghards, or Drenchards, now extinct in the male line, whose name, according to the local chronicles, was interpreted to mean *Strenuus Miles, vel Potator*, though certain members of the family were averse to the latter signification, and a duel was fought by one of them on that account, as is well known. But this is beside the story.

In the early part of the reign of the first King James there was visiting near this place of the Drenghards a lady of noble family and extraordinary beauty. She possessed no great wealth, it was said, but was so perfect and her manner so entrancing that suitors seemed to spring out of the ground wherever she went—a sufficient cause of anxiety to the Countess, her mother, her only living parent. Of these there were three in particular, whom neither her mother's complaints of prematurity, nor the ready raillery of the maiden herself, could effectually put off. The said gallants were a certain Sir John Gale, a Sir William Hervey, and a well-known Sir George Drenghard, one of the Drenghard family before mentioned. They had, curiously enough, all been equally honored with the distinction of knighthood, and their schemes for seeing her were manifold, each fearing that one of the others would steal a march over himself. Not content with calling, on every imaginable excuse, at the house of the relative with whom she sojourned, they intercepted her in rides and walks; and if any one of them chanced to surprise another in the act of paying her marked attentions the encounter often ended in an altercation of great violence. So heated and impassioned, indeed would they become, that the lady hardly felt herself safe in their company at such times, notwithstanding that she was a brave and buxom damsel, not easily put out, and with a daring spirit of humor in her composition, if not of coquetry.

On one of these occasions, which had taken place in her relative's grounds, and was unusually bitter threatening to result in a duel, she found it necessary to assert herself. Turning haughtily upon the pair of disputants, she declared that which ever should be the first to break the peace between them, whatever the provocation, that man should never be admitted to her presence again; and thus would she effectually stultify the aggressor by making the promotion of a quarrel a distinct bar to its object.

While the two knights were wearing rather a crestfallen appearance at her reprimand, the third, never far off, came upon the scene, and she repeated her caveat to him also. Seeing, then, how great was the concern of all at her peremptory mood, the lady's manner softened, and she said with a roguish smile:

"Have patience, have patience, you foolish men! Only abide your time quietly; and, in faith, I will marry you all in turn!"

They laughed heartily at this sally, all three together, as though they were the best of friends, at which she blushed, and showed some embarrassment—not having realized that her arch jest would have sounded so strange when uttered. The meeting which resulted thus, however, had its good effect in checking the bitterness of their rivalry; and they repeated her speech to their relatives and acquaintances with a hilarious frequency and publicity that the lady little divined, or she might have blushed and felt more embarrassment still.

In the course of time the position resolved itself, and the beauteous Lady Penelope (as she was called) made up her mind; her choice being the eldest of the three knights, Sir George Drenghard, owner of the mansion aforesaid, which thereupon became her home; and her husband, being a pleasant man, and his family, though not so noble, of as good repute as her own, all things seemed to show that she reckoned wisely in honoring him with her preference.

But what may lie behind the still and silent veil of the future none can foretell. In the course of a few months the husband of her choice died of his convivialities, (as if, indeed, to bear out his name,) and the Lady Penelope was left alone as mistress of the house. By this time she had apparently quite forgotten her careless declaration to her lovers collectively; but the lovers themselves had not forgotten it, and, as she would now be free to take a second one of them, Sir John Gale appeared at her door as early in her widowhood as it was proper and seemly to do so.

She gave him little encouragement; for of the two remaining, her best beloved was Sir William, of whom, if the truth must be told, she had often thought during her short married life. But he had not yet reappeared. Her heart began to be so much with him now, that she contrived to convey to him by direct hints through his friends that she would not be displeased by a renewal of his former attentions. Sir William, however, misapprehended her gentle signaling, and from excellent, though mistaken, motives of delicacy, delayed to intrude upon her for a long time. Meanwhile Sir John, now created a baronet, was unremitting, and she began to grow somewhat piqued at the backwardness of him she secretly desired to be forward.

"Never mind," her friends said jestingly to her, (knowing of her humorous remark, as everybody did, that she would marry them all three if they would have patience.) "Never mind; why hesitate upon the order of them? Take 'em as they come."

This vexed her still more, and regretting deeply, as she had often done, that such a careless speech ever had passed her lips, she fairly broke down under Sir John's importunity and accepted his hand. They were married on a fine Spring morning, about the very time at which the unfortunate Sir William discovered her preference for him, and was beginning to hasten home from a foreign Court to declare his unaltered devotion to her. On his arrival in England he learned the sad truth.

If Sir William suffered at her precipitancy under what she had deemed his neglect, the Lady Penelope herself suffered more. She had not long been the wife of Sir John Gale before [redacted] that it was her own stately mansion, left to her sole use by her first husband, which her second had entered into and was enjoying, his being but a mean and meagre thing.

But such is the flippancy of friends, that when she met them, and secretly confided her grief to their ears, they would say cheerily, "Never mind; there's a third to come yet!"—at which maladroit remark she would show much indignation and tell them they should know better than to trifle on such a solemn theme. Yet that the poor lady would have been only too happy to be the wife of the third instead of Sir John, whom she had taken, was painfully obvious, and much she was blamed for her foolish choice by some people. Sir William, however, had returned to foreign cities on learning the news of her marriage, and had never been heard of since.

Two or three years of suffering were passed by the Lady Penelope as the despised and childless wife of this man Sir John amid regrets that she had so greatly mistaken him, and sighs for one whom she thought never to see again; till it chanced that her husband fell sick of some slight ailment. One day after this, when she was sitting in his room looking from the window upon the expanse in front, she beheld approaching the house on foot a form she seemed to know well. Lady Penelope withdrew silently from the sick room, and descended to the hall, whence, through the doorway, she saw entering between the two round towers which at that time flanked the gateway, Sir William Hervey, as she had surmised, but looking thin and travel-worn. She advanced into the court-yard to meet him.

"I was passing through Casterbridge," he said with faltering deference, "and I walked out to ask after your ladyship's health. I felt that I could not do less; and of course, to pay my respects to your good husband, my heretofore acquaintance * * * But O, Penelope, th'st look sick and sorry!"

"I am heartsick, that's all," said she.

They could see in each other an emotion which neither wished to express, and they stood thus a long time with tears in their eyes.

"He does not treat 'ee well, I hear," said Sir William in a low voice. "May God in heaven forgive him; but it is asking a great deal!"

"Hush, hush!" said she hastily.

"Nay, but I will speak what I may honestly say," he answered. "I am not under your roof, and my tongue is free. Why didst not wait for me, Penelope, or send to me a more overletter? I would have traveled night and day to come."

"Too late, William, you must not ask it," said she, endeavoring to quiet him as in old times. "My husband just now is unwell. He will grow better in a day or two, maybe. You must call again and see him before you leave Casterbridge."

As she said this their eyes met. Each was thinking of her lightsome words about taking them in turn; each thought that two-thirds of that promise had been fulfilled. But, as if it were unpleasant to her that this recollection should have arisen, she spoke again quickly: "Come again in a day or two, when my husband will be well enough to see you."

Sir William departed without entering the house, and she returned to Sir John's chamber. He, rising from his pillow, said, "To whom hast been talking, wife, in the courtyard? I heard voices there."

She hesitated, and he repeated the question more impatiently.

"I do not wish to tell you now," said she.

"But I will know!" said he.

Then she answered, "Sir William Hervey."

"I thought as much!" cried Sir John, drops of perspiration standing on his white face. "A skulking villain! A sick man's ears are keen, my lady. I heard they were lover like tones, and he called 'ee by your Christian name. These be your intrigues, my lady, when I am off my legs a while!"

"On my honor," cried she "you do me a wrong. I swear I did not know of his coming!"

"Swear as you will," said Sir John, "I don't believe 'ee." And with this he taunted her and worked himself into a greater passion, which much increased his illness. His lady sat still, brooding. There was that upon her face which had seldom been there since her marriage, and she seemed to think anew of what she had so lightly said in the days of her freedom, when her three lovers were one and all coveting her hand. "I began at the wrong end of them," she murmured.

"My God—that did I!"

"What?" said he.

"Nothing," said she. "I spoke to myself only."

It was somewhat strange that after this day, while she went about the house with even a sadder face than usual, her churlish husband grew worse, and, what was more, to the surprise of all, though to the regret of few, he died a fortnight later. Sir William had not called upon him as he had promised, having received a private communication from Lady Penelope, frankly informing him that to do so would be inadvisable by reason of her husband's temper.

Now when Sir John was gone and his remains carried to his family burying place in another part of England, the lady began in due time to wonder whither Sir William had betaken himself. But she had been cured of precipitancy, if ever woman were, and was prepared to wait her whole life-time a widow if the said Sir William should not reappear. Her life was now passed mostly within the walls, or in promenading between the pleasaunce and the bowling green, and she very seldom went even so far as the high road which then skirted the grounds on the North, though it has now, and for many years, been diverted to the south side. Her patience was rewarded, (if love be in any case a reward;) for one day, many months after her second husband's death, a messenger arrived at her gate with the intelligence that Sir William Hervey was again in Casterbridge and would be glad to know if it were her pleasure that he should wait upon her.

It need hardly be said that permission was joyfully granted, and within two hours her lover stood before her, a more thoughtful man than formerly, but in all essential respects the same man, generous, modest to diffidence, and sincere. The reserve which womanly decorum threw over her manner was but too obviously artificial, and when he said, "The ways of Providence are strange," and added, after a moment "and, merciful likewise," she could not conceal her agitation and burst into tears upon his neck.

"But this is too soon," she said, starting back.

"But no," said he. "You have passed eleven months in widowhood, and it is not as if Sir John had been a good husband to you."

His visits grew pretty frequent now, as may well be guessed, and in a month os two he began to urge her to an early union. But she counseled a little longer delay.

"Why?" said he. "Surely I have waited long! Life is short; we are getting older every day, and I am the last of the three."

"Yes," said the lady frankly. "And that is why I would not have you hasten. Our marriage may seem so strange to everybody, after my unlucky remark on that occasion we know so well, and which so many others know likewise, thanks to talebearers."

On this representation he conceded a little space for the sake of her good name. But the destined day of their marriage at last arrived, and it was a gay time for the villagers and all concerned, and the bells in the parish church rang from noon till night. Thus at last she was united to the man who had loved her the most tenderly of them all, who but for his reticence might perhaps have been the first to win her. Often did he say to himself, "How wondrous that her words should have been fulfilled! Many a truth hath been spoken in jest, but never a more remarkable one." The noble lady herself preferred not to dwell on the coincidence, a certain shyness, if not shame, crossing her fair face at an allusion thereto.

But people will have their say, sensitive souls or none, and their sayings on this third occasion took a singular shape. "Surely," they whispered, "there is something more than chance in this. * * * The death of the first was possibly natural; but what of the death of the second who ill used her, and whom, loving the third so desperately, she must have wished out of the way?"

Then they pieced together sundry trival incidents of Sir John's illness, and dwelt upon the indubitable truth, that he had grown worse after her lover's unexpected visit, till a very sinsiter theory was built up as to the hand she may have had in Sir John's premature demise. But nothing of this suspicion was said openly, for she was a lady of noble birth—nobler, indeed, than either of her husbands—and what people suspected they feared to express in formal accusation.

The mansion that she occupied had been left to her for so long a time as she should choose to reside in it, and, having a regard for the spot, she had coaxed Sir William to remain there. But in the end it was unfortunate; for one day, when in the full tide of his happiness, he was walking among the willows near the garden, where he overheard a conversation between some basketmakers who were cutting the osiers for their use. In this fatal dialogue the suspicions of the neighboring townsfolk were revealed to him for the first time. On his return he seemed to have aged years.

But he said nothing; indeed, it was a thing impossible. And from that hour an estrangement began. She could not understand it, and simply waited. One day he said, however, "I must go abroad."

"But why?" said she. "William, have I offended you?"

"No," said he; "but I must go."

She could coax little more out of him, and in itself there was nothing unnatural in his departure, for he had been a wanderer from his youth. In a few days he started off, apparently quite another man than he who rushed to her side so devotedly a few months before.

It is not known when or how the rumors, which were thick in the atmosphere around her, actually reached the Lady Penelope's ears, but that they reached her there is no doubt. Then a reason for her husband's departure occurred to her appalled mind, and a loss of health became quickly apparent. She dwindled thin in the face, and the veins in her temples could all be distinctly traced. Her rings fell off her fingers, and her arms hung like the flails of the thrasher, though they had till lately been so round and beautiful. She wrote to her husband repeatedly, begging him to return to her; but he, being in extreme and wretched doubt—moreover, knowing nothing of her ill health, and never suspecting that the rumors had reached her also—deemed absence best, and postponed his return a while, giving various reason for his delay.

At length, however, when the Lady Penelope had given birth to a still-born child, her mother, the Countess, addressed a letter to Sir William, requesting him to come back to her if he wished to see her alive, since she was wasting away of some mysterious disease, which seemed to be rather mental than physical. It was evident that his mother-in-law knew nothing of the secret, for she lived at a distance; but Sir William promptly hastened home, and stood beside the bed of his now dying wife.

"Believe me, William," she said when they were alone, "I am innocent—innocent."

"Of what?" said he. "Heaven forbid that I should accuse you of anything!"

"But you do accuse me—silently!" she gasped. I could not write thereon—and ask you to hear me. It was too much, too degrading. But would that I had been less proud! They suspect me of poisoning him, William! But I am innocent of that wicked crime. He died naturally. I loved you—too soon; but that was all!"

Nothing availed to save her. The worm had gnawed too far into her heart before Sir William's return for anything to be remedied now; and in a few weeks she breathed her last. After her death the people spoke louder, and her conduct became a subject of public discussion. A little later on the physician, who had attended the late Sir John, heard the rumor and came down from the place near London to which he latterly had retired with the express purpose of calling upon Sir William Hervey, now staying in Casterbridge.

He stated that, at the request of a relative of Sir John's, who wished to be assured on the matter by reason of its suddenness, he had, with the assistance of a surgeon, made a private examination of Sir John's body immediately after his decease, and found that it had resulted from purely natural causes. Nobody at this time had breathed a suspicion of foul play, and therefore nothing was said which might since have established her innocence.

It being thus placed beyond doubt that the beautiful and noble lady had been done to death by a wicked scandal that was wholly unfounded, her husband was stung with a dreadful remorse at the share he had taken in her misfortunes and left the country anew, this time never to return alive. He survived her but a few years, and his body was brought home and buried beside his wife's under the tomb which is still visible in the parish church. Until lately there was a good portrait of her, in weeds for her first husband, with a cross in her hand, at the ancestral seat of her family, where she was much pitied, as she deserved to be. Yet there were some severe enough to say—and these not unjust persons in other respects—that though unquestionably innocent of the crime imputed to her, she had shown an unseemly wantonness in contracting three marriages in such rapid succession, and that the untrue suspicion might have been ordered by Providence (who often works indirectly) as a punishment for her self-indulgence. Upon that point I have no opinion to offer.

THOMAS HARDY.

It has been asserted that chewing wooden toothpicks sometimes produces small ulcers in the mouth, and that even the stomach has been similarly affected by the action of the small particles of wood detached by chewing.

Written for the SENTINEL.

Women and the Poets.

WOMAN:
"Man's guardian angel in his pilgrimage,
The sunshine of his youth and moonlight of his age."

From all the ages of the past down to the present hour, woman has been the inspiration of the poet. And all the poets from Homer downward have united in singing her beauty and her virtues. It is a curious fact, and yet one that is seldom commented upon, that the poet's ideal woman is the purely feminine being such as Milton describes thus:—

"For contemplation he and valor formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace."

Even tho' they have celebrated in heroic verse the courage of Boadicea, the triumphs of Joan D'Arc, or the ambition of Lady Macbeth; yet even these bards display the same preference for the true woman, with her gentle words, and tender graces of mind and person.

Yet Milton and Shakspeare, two of the greatest poets, are in perfect agreement with each other in teaching that woman can become man's equal without becoming unsexed; and that both can attain the same level, without one usurping the place and duties of the other. A well known writer has said: "Next to the Bible, Shakspeare is the greatest benefactor of womankind, for next to the Bible he has gone farther toward appreciating what woman is, and instructing her as to what she should become." Still it is a noted fact, that few women care to read Shakespeare and fewer still study his works with the enthusiasm they bestow upon other poets. Actresses of histrionic not, of course, excepted.

Some beautiful delineations of womanly grace and sweetness have been given us by Shakespeare. For instance, the character of Portia, wife of Brutus; and Cordelia in King Lear, where she says:

"Thou poor Cordelia!"
And yet, not so; since I am sure
My love's more richer than my tongue."

Tennyson too has some lovely ideal women. We might go on quoting indefinitely from bards, both ancient and modern, who have chosen love and woman as their noblest themes of song. Wordsworth has immortalized his wife in these touching lines.

"She who dwells with me, whom I love with such communion
That no place on earth can ever be a solitude to me."

And our own American poet has most beautifully expressed his own ideal of woman's quiet life and home service, thus:—

"In that stillness which most a woman, calm and holy,
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart—feeding its flame."

Sight and Smell of Birds.

A hawk can spy a lark upon a piece of earth almost exactly the same color at twenty times the distance it is perceptible to man or dog; a kite soaring out of human sight can still distinguish and pounce upon lizards and field mice on the ground; and the distance at which eagles and vultures can spy out their prey is almost incredible. Recent discoveries, especially Darwin's observations, have inclined naturalists to the belief that birds of prey have not the acute smell with which they were once accredited. Their acute sight seems better to account for their actions, and they appear to be guided by sight alone, as they never sniff at anything, but dart straight at the object of their desire. Their counterparts in the ocean, however, undoubtedly see and smell equally well, but are more guided by smell than sight. In both sharks and rays the eyes are good, and have a most clear and distinct expression, though since they scent their prey from a great distance, and swim up to it with great rapidity, "smell," as Lacapede says, "may be called their real eye."

Preserving Fabrics From Decay.

A Belgian chemist has, according to the *Textile Manufacturer*, discovered a means for rendering fabrics, no matter how delicate in texture or color, proof against decay. The wonderful state of preservation which the head bands of Egyptian mummies exhibit is due to their having been impregnated with a kind of resin. This led the inventor to make certain experiments with the substance extracted from birch bark, to which the peculiar aroma of Russian leather is due, and he found out that the green tar which was left over after the oil used in tanning had been extracted from the white bark of the birch tree yields neither acid nor alkaloid, and that in solution with alcohol it forms a liquid of remarkable fluidity with the power of resisting, when once dried, even the action of alcohol itself. This substance will, it is said, unite with the most delicate and brilliant colors, and render them imperishable.

A dry, airy loft is one of the very best places in which to store onions. They should be spread out.

A Novel Industry.

The *N. Y. Sun* says: A comparatively new avenue of employment for women, particularly for intelligent and educated women, is that of purveyor of information on topics of the day. The plan originated with a bright woman who, at a dinner some months ago, when the Samoan matter was first prominent, beheld the consternation into which the entire company was thrown by the innocent question of one of them: "Where is Samoa, by the way?" None of them, including herself, knew for a certainty, although several more or less hazily correct surmises were given. The bright woman, whose resources needed eking out, saw her opportunity. Within a week she had sent out to various ladies of her acquaintance little written notices that on the following Tuesday afternoon an informal "talk" upon "Samoa and the Samoan matter" would be delivered at the residence of Mrs. ——, West Seventieth street, a somewhat prominent society woman who lent her this aid. It was further stated that the purpose of the talk was to present in a concise and portable way the salient features of a subject at the moment on the popular tongue. Fully a score of ladies were present, from which number a class of ten for a course of talks was evolved. The terms were a dollar apiece from every member for a lecture, and one lecture per week was given during the following three months, the class increasing to twenty in a very short time. Before she had conducted the enterprise a month the fair lecturer had secured classes in both Brooklyn and Jersey City, and this year her scheme has so enlarged upon her hands that four days in the week she is at work morning and afternoon, for, in addition to the cities, she has classes in several suburban communities. One lecture, of course, serves for a week's work, and as she will take no class of less than ten paying members, it may be readily seen that the work is profitable. It is also pleasant and not difficult. The newspapers furnish her with topics and an afternoon at a public library affords the information needed. Occasionally, though not often, a fashionable book is the subject of a talk; the gist of such, however, is usually so readily obtained through any one of the innumerable newspapers and periodical reviews that the value of comment is not so obvious as in the case of other popular topics. The success of the pioneer in the work has been of a nature to attract others to non-competitive fields. Two charming women in Seneca Falls have taken to the parlor platform, joining forces in the undertaking, and have flourishing classes, not only in the village named, but in Waterloo and Syracuse, with designs upon adjacent neighborhoods. All of the talkers made a specialty of complete and accurate information upon the topic discussed, rather than voicing their individual opinion upon it. It is a gratifying comment upon the growth of the standard of development in village communities that the disciples of the metropolitan lecturer so quickly secured their audiences.

Back to Her Side.

An old, dilapidated prairie schooner or camper's wagon came creaking through the December wind, bound westward. As it came nearer in its slow course across the plain I saw that the horses were thin and spiritless, and the driver, who sat on a rough board seat beneath the faded and torn canvass cover, was as woebegone as they.

He had once been a good-looking man, but his sad face and unkempt clothing told too well the story of sorrow or disappointment.

"How far is it to the next town?" he asked as he came opposite me.

"About five miles."

"How is the road? Can I get there before night?"

"I am afraid not without hurrying."

The clouds were skimming across the sky and a storm seemed riding on the back of the north wind that blew fiercely over the prairie.

"Guess I'll go on, though," he ejaculated after having considered a moment. Then he alighted from the wagon and commenced fixing a broken strap of the harness with some cord he drew from the wagon box.

"What's your hurry? Where are you bound for?" were my queries.

"I'm goin' to Smith County," he replied wearily, as he thought of the long trip, almost to the foot of the Rockies, "an' I must get there before the first of the month."

"Why, got some land there?"

"No, not exactly, but something better. I lived there two years ago—Mary and I. The hot winds came and the times grew hard for us. We worked night and day, but there wasn't no use—the sun jist dried up the ground an' we almost give up. Then Mary died; she was my wife, you know," he said, in half apologetic words. "She helped all she could, but her strength wouldn't hold out."

"And you were left alone?"

"Yes, so much alone that I buried her all by myself on our little claim an' then started for the old home back east to try and make a livin'. I lost my right to the claim," he went on wearily after a pause, "but I didn't care much, except that she was there. Now I must go though an' see to it."

"Do you expect to get it back?"

"Not all of it; I don't want it. But they tell me the land is all bein' plowed up in that neighborhood an' I'm afraid they'll plow over *her* grave."

"And so you'll buy the land?"

"A little of it—that that holds her. I kin make a livin' I know, an' I'll stay by her side till the end. It seemed like the sun went out when she left me there."

He resisted all my efforts to induce him to remain for the night. He must hurry, he said.

And the last I saw of him he was urging the tired horses toward the angry sunset sky, eager to reach the grave of the one he loved so well.

Humble in station though he was, crude though his surroundings, his lonely vigil on the far Western prairie, with the wide spreading sea of grass around and only the tiny mound of earth to attract his lonely heart has often seemed a picture worthy of a true artist's touch.

Besieged by a Toad.

From the BALTIMORE SUN.

A story copied in the *Sun* reminds me of a still more striking instance of the toad's indomitable pluck than any thing I have ever seen in print, which was observed in my boyhood at the door of a farm-house in Fairfax county, Va. The door-steps were cut from the trunk of a large tree, and a large spider had spun a strong web in a cosy corner near the ground, between the rounding curve of the block and the side of the log house. The grass had been worn from a space four or five feet wide about the entrance to the dwelling, leaving exposed a batch of hard reddish soil. There were locust trees around the house, and bunches of plantain leaves grew rankly in the thin grass of the lawn.

It was late in a droway summer afternoon. The spider was basking in the sun waiting for flies, when a valorous young toad appeared on the scene, hopping directly toward the spider's citadel. As the enemy appeared in sight the spider seemed to swell in size and put on his war paint, for, whereas he was dull in color before, he now became all aglow with brilliant hues. The toad advanced boldly to the investment of the castle, halting for a second or two below, and leisurely surveying the field. When these observations had been taken, he leaped up half a dozen times in quick succession at the enemy and then rapidly retreated to the nearest tuft of plantain leaves, from which he nipped two or three pieces and swallowed them. Returning to the attack, the same series of operations were repeated many times, until the spider had spent all his venom, it is supposed, and the web was broken down and the brave defender was dead.

It was nearly dark before the combat closed. Nothing could exceed the courage of the defense unless it was the persistency of the attack. I would not venture to guess how many times the toad got a dose of virus from the spider, and can account for his resort to the plantain leaves only on the supposition that the courageous little warrior there found a sufficient antidote for the spider's poison. But throughout the whole of the lengthly contest, it was the gamest assault on an intrenched enemy I ever witnessed. Besides this it afforded an example of pertinacity on the part of the despised toad which fully parallels the heroic quality of the spider, made familiar to us in youth by the story of the Bruce encouraged to renewed effort by the example of one of these little insects.

The resident surgeon of St. Barnabas Hospital, Minneapolis, Minn., reports an operation of a very painful kind performed on a boy of seventeen years without the use of other anæsthetic than the power of hypnotism. The patient was led to and from the operating table, and even assisted the operator by assuming any position ordered, yet suffered no pain, lay perfectly quiet two hours and then called for food, as the operator had suggested he should do at a certain time.

Weather Signs.

There is considerable folk lore extant on the subject of the moon's influence on the weather. It is the purpose of this article to refer to some of the more popular sayings, and those which have received the attention of local meterologists. It is believed, however, that the influence, if any, exerted by the moon on the earth's atmosphere is too insignificant to warrant the expectation that practical results can follow continued observation or more thorough research. It would seem that these signs are largely based, in fact, upon the great variability of moisture in the atmosphere and the appearance of the moon as seen through such conditions of the air. Therefore the change is not in the moon or because of its position, but in the atmosphere through which that body is seen. A full moon in April brings frost. In the old of the moon a cloudy morning bodes a fair afternoon.

When the moon runs high expect cool or cold weather.

When the new moon is far north in summer expect cool weather; in winter, cold. If the moon changes (full or new) in fair or warm part of the day, it indicates a warm moon, and if it changes in the cool part of the day it indicates that the weather will be cool during the moon. If the moon is rainy throughout it will be clear at the change, and perhaps the rain will return a few days after. If there be a change of weather at the time of the quarters (under the same conditions as noted above) the new condition will probably last sometime.

The further the moon is to the south the greater the draught; the further west the greater the flood, and the further northwest the greater the cold. When the horns of the moon are sharp it indicates dry weather. When the new moon is far in the south it indicates dry weather for a month.

A dry moon is far north and soon seen. When the moon is visible in the daytime the days are relatively cool. If the moon changes with the wind in the east the weather during that moon will be foul.

The fifth day of the new moon indicates the general character of the weather until the full of the moon.

In Western Kansas it is said that when the moon is near full it never storms.

The full moon eats clouds (nautical sayings). If the moon be fair throughout, and rain at the close, the fair weather will probaby return on the fourth or fifth day.

When phases of the moon occur in the evening, expect fair weather. Five changes of the moon in one month denotes cool weather in summer and cold in winter.

Two full moons in a calendar month bring on a flood.

If the full moon rises clear expect fine weather.

If the moon is seen between the scud and broken clouds during a gale it is expected to scuff or break away the bad weather.

The larger the halo about the moon the nearer the rain clouds and the sooner the rain may be expected.

A lunar halo indicates rain, and the number of stars observed inclosed within the ring is said to indicate the number of days of continued rain.

Among the successful inventions in the practical application of electricity the United States may claim the telegraph, the telephone, the incandescent light, and unquestionably the microphone also. This is a brilliant record. To France belongs the credit of the accumulator and the Grammering; to Italy, the battery and the Pacinotti ring; to England, the self-exciting dynamo; to Germany, the drumarmature, and to Russia, the commercial arc lamp.

A London physician, who is an expert in diseases of the eye, says that he recently had a patient who, by excessive smoking, had brought on "an attack of amblyopia, with a central scotoma." That ought to be a warning to smokers. The plain English of it is, that the smoker's vision had become dull and weakened, and that he was afflicted with a dizziness which caused him to imagine that his head was constantly spinning around.

A use has been found for sour canned corn. Hitherto it has been considered worthless. But a demand for it has sprung up in the great German-American centers of Cincinnati and New York, where it is used to mix with saurkraut, the quality of which, it is said, is improved by it.

London Industries, in its annual review for 1889, says: "It is to Americans that we owe almost all the most recent developments in the steam engine. Novel boilers, valve gears and framings are all of American origin."

No farm is complete without a good house to store the implements in, and no farmer understands his business that does not store his implements when not in use.

It's the astounding mixture of Summer air and Winter gales that plays the mischief with young and old, rich and poor alike.

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