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A MESSAGE.

I.

What can I hope for thee?
A little less of care than weighs me down,
A little less of woe than makes my crown,
And fewer pains than 'round about me frown,
Are what I hope for thee.

II.

Yea, these I wish for thee!
A sweeter peace than I have ever known,
And sturdier good than I have ever sown,
And that thou be to manliest manhood grown,
These do I wish for thee!

III.

For, lo! I find in thee
The chance to be all that I wished to be,
The chance to see all that I wished to see,
The chance of joys that could not come to me,
These do I find in thee.

IV.

And I petition thee:
Be brave, whatever sullen cares assail,
Be good, whatever tempter would prevail,
And smile serene however men may rail,
This I petition thee.

V.

And let me counsel thee:
Nourish no dream that springs within thy heart
To draw thee from the work-world's busy mart,
For, at the last, thou and thy dream must part;
And so I counsel thee.

VI.

This is from me to thee:
And one day when my work falls from my hand,
So much to-day thou can't not understand,
The reason of the things that I have planned
Will be made plain to thee.

—*James Berry Benset.*

ON SKATES.

"It ain't the way I was brought up," said Mrs. Gerard. "In the days when I was a girl, we used to be satisfied to sit down and sew, and make table linen and bed quilts, against we got a chance of a good husband. We never went skating, or rushed about playing lawn tennis. If we had any leisure time after the cows were milked, and the butter and cheese looked after, and the housework done up, we learned to use our needles."

"But I don't see any chance of a good husband for me, Mrs. Gerard, said Sylvia, saucily. "There are two single men in Bustleboro, and one is the Methodist minister, who is sixty-odd, and the other is old Jack Dodd, who hasn't got his full wits, and has to be watched by his little nieces and nephews."

"Who knows what may happen?" said the old lady, oracularly.

"I wish my Cousin Chester would come home," sighed Sylvia, leaning her plump, white chin on one hand, as she stared out over the wintry landscape. "Perhaps," and her eyes sparkled mischievously, "he might fall in love with me!"

Mrs. Gerard bristled all over at this audacious suggestion.

"Fall in love with you, indeed!" said she. "Why you are the last person in the world I would consent to his marrying!"

Sylvia's countenance fell; she reddened to the very roots of her hair.

She had been only in sport when she uttered her words, but Mrs. Gerard had evidently accepted them in good faith.

"Folks can't skate through life!" said Mrs. Gerard, satirically. "Nor get cookery receipts out of novel books, nor mend stockings with your fine Kensington-stitches. I want Chester's wife to be a real helpmeet to him, not a millstone slung around his neck."

"Well, you need not be alarmed," said Sylvia, flushed with unspoken resentment. "Rest assured, Mrs. Gerard, I shall never marry your son!"

"Then we'll both be satisfied," said the old lady, philosophically; "and now you'd better go and get those rolls of calico, and we'll pick out some pieces for a patchwork quilt."

Sylvia glanced out at the diamond brightness of the snow-covered fields and vales.

"Oh, Mrs. Gerard," said she, "the pond by Duton's Mill is crowded with skaters, and the ice is perfect, and I was longing to go there this afternoon!"

"All the loafers in the neighborhood are there, and all the giddy-headed girls" retorted Mrs. Gerard. "It's no place for you to be seen."

"Well, then, mayn't I go down on the river?" pleaded Sylvia, eagerly. "I do so want to skate! Oh, it is exactly as if you were a bird, flying through the keen, cold air and the sunshine! Mayn't I go, Mrs. Gerard. Do say yes!"

Mrs. Gerard compressed her lips.

"I never did approve of skating," said she, "and I never shall. In my days, girls were girls and boys were boys."

"Horrid old woman!" thought poor Sylvia, ready to cry. "But at least, she hasn't absolutely forbidden me. And the ice is like glass, and I have been shut in the house for three days, chopping sausage meat and darning pillow-cases. Oh, I must have one more skate, if I die for it!"

Sylvia Sefton was Mrs. Gerard's second cousin, who, deprived of her sole remaining parent by death, had come to live with her. She was not altogether dependent on her relation—in fact, she had a hundred dollars a year of her own.

"Enough," said Mrs. Gerard, "to clothe you nicely and pay all the little odd expenses; and you can earn your board and lodging by helping me around the house—and be a lot of company for me into the bargain. Bustleboro's an awful lonesome place, and there's days and days when me and the cat sits and looks at each other all day long without a soul crossing the threshold."

Mrs. Gerard was a kind-hearted old lady, full of generous impulses. Sylvia was affectionate and clinging in her nature, and yet the two women somehow did not agree.

Mrs. Gerard adhered steadfastly to the traditions of a past generation. Sylvia had grown up according to newer lights, and both of them were to a certain degree right.

Of all creatures in the world, Mrs. Gerard most loved and worshiped her son Chester, who was in charge of a telegraph station at a thriving young town some ten or twelve miles away, and Sylvia was fast teaching herself to dislike this paragon cousin of hers, although she had never seen him but once or twice.

She was thinking not very pleasantly about these things as she ran upstairs to get her skates. Presently she came down again.

"Mrs. Gerard," said she, "I can't find my skates. Have you seen them?"

"Where should I see your skates?" said Mrs. Gerard, crossly, as she stooped to pick up the brass-headed poker and return it to its place by the fender. "Do you think I want to wear 'em?"

Sylvia went back for a second search; but it was no more satisfactory than the first had been. She sought high and she sought low, but still without effect.

"I am sure I left them right here under the light table," said she to herself. "And now they are gone—my beautiful, new skates."

But she was not disposed entirely to abandon her hopes for a little fresh air, even though her prospects of skating were gone. She put on her scarlet hood and cape, shedding a few quiet tears as she did so, and went out for a walk in the white silence of the March woods.

Nature may justly be termed the arch-consoler, and Sylva had been out but a short time when the sunshine and the crisp, cold breezes calmed the fever of her rebellious heart as with the touch of a cooling hand. She watched the sunset redden over the forests; she beheld, from her vantage-ground on the mountain side, the skaters disappear, one by one, from Duton's pond; she felt, rather than saw, the hush of the coming twilight, through which, here and there, the silver point of a star twinkled out, and she sang softly to herself as she came back to the farm-house.

Mrs. Gerald, very pale, met her at the door.

"Oh, Sylvia!" she cried. "Where have you been? I thought you would never come back! Chester is here—my poor, poor boy!"

"What has happened?" cried Sylvia. "Where is he?"

"On the sofa in the parlor!" said Mrs. Gerard, getting her words out incoherently and by jerks. "And I'm afraid he is dying! He was intending to surprise me, and he rode over from Hartwick on Mrs. Poyntz's black horse, that never was fit for a Christian to ride, and the brute shied at a tree-stump that showed black against the white snow, and threw him. And he could just crawl to the door, with his leg broken, before he fainted dead away. Oh, Chester—oh, my poor boy!"

"But what can I do?" said Sylvia. "I know nothing about sickness."

"You can go for the doctor," said Mrs. Gerard. "And do, for my sake, make haste! It's four full miles there, and Chester may die from the pain before we get his leg set. It's swelling fast, and he goes from one swoon into another."

"Four miles!" repeated Sylvia. "Yes, I'll go, Mrs. Gerard; but four miles! If I had my skates, I could go directly down the river in a quarter of the time it would take to plod along the deep snow of the road."

Mrs. Gerard flushed deeply as she met Sylvia's frank look. She went to the closet, unlocked a drawer, and taking out the missing skates, placed them on the floor beside Sylvia.

The girl looked keenly at her.

"You found them?" said she.

"I knew where they were all the time," said Mrs. Gerard. "I—I hid them. I am very sorry!"

By this time, Sylvia had looked to the fastenings. They were all right.

"Good-by!" said she, kindly. "Don't fret, I will assuredly bring the doctor back with me."

She rushed down the steep, wooded bank toward the steely glitter of the river; and, five minutes afterward, Mrs. Gerard, looking from her window, saw the light, straight figure, skimming swiftly along, more like the arrowy dart of a bird than the motion of a human being, until it was lost in the approaching shadows of dusk.

"What would have become of me now," she thought, "if Sylvia had not learned to skate?"

Miss Sefton was fortunate enough to find the doctor at home, and rode back with him in his buggy; and he could not say enough in praise of her spirit and courage.

It was to her that he gave all charges and directions regarding the patient.

"My dear madam," he said, in answer to Mrs. Gerard's piteous pleadings, "this young lady is a born nurse. She has a cool head, a light hand and plenty of nerve. She is the proper person to take care of Mr. Gerard."

And Sylvia proved herself worthy of his words.

Chester Gerard recovered slowly, but the time did not hang heavily on his hands.

Sylvia was the brightest and cheeriest of companions.

At the end of the second month, the patient was allowed to go out into the budding April world of trees and bushes, and bright blue sky; and while he was taking his first walk. Sylvia came to the old lady, with varying color.

"Dear Mrs. Gerard," said she, "I have something to tell you."

Mrs. Gerard's eyes sparkled.

"Has he asked you to marry him—already?" said she. "But I knew he was getting to love you. "Oh, I am so glad!"

"You approve it, then?" said Sylvia, rather disappointed.

"I never was so pleased in all my life," said the old lady.

"But—but—" hesitated Sylvia, "I don't think I care for him as a wife should care for her husband—I am sure I don't!"

"Mrs. Gerard's face visibly lengthened.

"Sylvia, Sylvia, don't say that, she cried. "Do you try to like him—for my sake! And he loves you so much, my darling!"

"For your sake, Mrs. Gerard? Why are you so much interested? Is Doctor Mildmay—"

"Who is talking about Doctor Mildmay?" exclaimed Mrs. Gerard.

"Why, you, aren't you?" retorted Sylvia.

"No. I'm talking about my son, Chester," said the old lady.

Sylvia's face had turned a soft, rosy pink; her bright eyes fell to the ground.

"Does—Chester love me?" she murmured.

"He was going to tell you so to-day," said Mrs. Gerard.

"Then I am glad I refused Doctor Mildmay," said Sylvia.

So both these ladies broke their word.

Mrs. Gerard not only consented that Sylvia should become her daughter-in-law, but abjectly implored her to do so; and Sylvia, after declaring that "she never would marry Chester Gerard," went straightway and wedded him.

And there never was a word of objection spoken thenceforward against Sylvia's skating. On the contrary, her mother-in-law did everything in her power to encourage this healthful and invigorating exercise.

"Sylvia's skates did me a good turn once," she declared, with a wise nod of her head.—*Helen Forrest Graves.*

How Royal Families Live.

England stands at the head of all European nations in the cost of its nobility and Germany in the expenses of maintaining the royal family alone. The latter empire, with a population of not more than 45,000,000, has to support twenty-two royal, princely and ducal families, and the direct cost of their maintenance is $16,500,000.

In Prussia and several of the other German States the reigning family, besides its public income, possesses very large private estates, and, indeed, in some of the States the princes are the chief land-owners.

Turkey comes next to Germany in its royal expenditures, the total amount absorbed by the sultan and his family being about $16,250,000. The imperial family of Russia costs that country $12,250,000, and the greater part which comes in the shape of rents from the crown domains which consist of more than a million square miles of land, besides gold and silver-mines. The Austrian imperial family is tolerably well off, which comes directly from the public purse.

The sum expended on account of the British royal family will be increased by $30,000 a year on the coming marriage of the Princess Beatrice, and it is expected that there will shortly be a call for an income for the oldest son of the Prince of Wales. Yet the sum thus granted will be but a homœopathic dose compared with the annual expenditures in appointments, salaries, pensions and moneys received by the families and relations of dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts and barons, amounting to the prodigious total of $108,614,630, divided as follows; Twenty-eight families of dukes take $9,760,000; thirty-three families of marquises, $8,305,950; 206 families of earls, $18,181,203; sixty families of viscounts, $11,241,200; 211 families of barons, $31,126,188. Of these the Duke of Richmond heads the list with $1,600,000; followed by the Duke of Wellington, $1,425,500; the Duke of Grafton, $1,115,850, and so on. The old Duchess of Cambridge, now eighty-eight years of age, continues to draw from the British treasury $30,000 a year, beside enjoying the royal palaces of St. James and Kew as her residences. Her son, the queen's cousin, receives about $110,000 a year from the same source to compensate him for the loss of the throne, which would have been his had the queen died without an heir, or had never been born.

Italy pays her royal family $3,500,000 a year, which is a very large sum in proportion to the means of the country, while Spain disburses on the same account $2,000,000. This ends the list of European monarchies of large population. But the minor monarchies also pay their royal families very large sums. Belgium, with about as large a population as the State of New York, pays $600,000 a year to her king, and Portugal, with three-quarters of a million less population, pays $636,000. Monarchy costs Sweden and Norway $587,500 annually; Denmark, $310,000; Holland, $315,000; Roumania, $240,000, and Greece, $210,000. But $60,000 of this last sum is paid by England, France and Russia. Republican France gives her president $180,000, two-thirds of which is in the form of salary and one-third for household expenses.

The Swiss republic pays its president $3,000 a year, which is probably the smallest sum that the head of any civilized nation in the world receives. All the expenditures of Switzerland are on a correspondingly low scale. With a population approaching 3,000,000, the entire expenditures of the confederation does not reach $10,000,000 annually.

General Gordon's Paper Money.

A Gubat letter to a London paper says: "The Mahdi, when Khartoum fell, secured the whole of General Gordon's papers, together with a large number of bank notes issued by the gallant defender of Khartoum. These, we are informed, he is now taking steps to negotiate, and obtain much-needed ready cash by discounting them. As General Gordon pledged England's word to redeem them, it will require some ingenuity to defeat the Mahdi's object. Indeed, it will be next to impossible to detect the notes which the Madhi has seized and those which have been circulated bona fide by General Gordon himself, especially as all documents are in the False Prophet's hands. Many of the people from Khartoum who came here in Gordon's steamers hold these notes, which they obtained in a perfectly legitimate manner, and such claims as theirs can scarcely be overlooked. Many natives, moreover, who months ago held friendly and trading relations with Khartoum, have these pieces of paper, and they will certainly look for their redemption. Many of the notes have been bought by the officers here at a far higher rate than their nomiual value, as a memento of the hero who is gone. Another relic of the gallant defense of Khartoum, however, is even more sought after than the bank notes, and that is the leaden medals which General Gordon ordered to be struck and distributed to every man, woman and child in the beleaguered city, in token of the bravery they had displayed. Several of these medals were in possession of Gordon's men, but they were so eagerly bought up, not only by officers but by the men too, that they are now at a premium, and at such a premium, too, that an offer of their weight in gold fails to induce the lucky owners to part with them."

Dexter is still alive and well at M. Bonner's stables in New York, and he is twenty-six years old.

THE CITY OF KHARTOUM.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE WEHRE GORDON FELL.

The Picturesque City on the Nile—Its Streets and Surroundings—Fatal Desert Winds.

Khartoum is no exception to the ruinous aspect that marks all Arab towns when seen from a distance. It needs all the picturesqueness of the graceful palms that rise above it in every direction, the white-sailed boats that flit along its shores like butterflies, the noble sweep of the Blue Nile on one side and the White Nile on the other, the rich blue sky and dazzling sunlight, to counteract the depressing effect of this mass of flat-roofed, whity-gray, tomb-like houses amid the dim, boundless emptiness of the eternal desert, along the horizon of which quivers a film of intense heat like the reek from a furnace mouth. During the wet season the narrow, crooked, filthy streets are mere ponds, breathing stench and fever. Many of the "houses" are circular mud burrows topped with a pointed thatch of corn stalks, while the high, blank walls encircling the countless gardens enhance indescribably the dreary effect.

About 108 miles north of Khartoum, and almost midway to Berber, lies the fortified village of El Metemneh, connected with Shendy, on the opposite bank, by a clumsy native ferry-boat, on which an Arab stands upright with a strip of canvas held outstretched above his head to do duty for mast and sail, two others holding this living mast firm, and a fourth steering. Shendy has never recovered its destruction by Mehemet Ali's son-in-law in 1821, and the sole token of its former greatness is the huge crumbling fort overlooking the river, the present "town" being a cluster of low hovels two miles distant, grouped around a wide, bare market-place.

In the hollow between the Upper Nile and its great westward bend beyond Abu-Hamed lies the Bayuda Desert, across which the British marched to Metemneh (via Abu-Klea) from Korti, General Wolseley's present headquarters. The latter place, overhanging the Nile from a steep bank shaded by clustering trees, is pleasant enough, despite the perilous shoals around its landing place. The now memorable halting-place of Jebel-Gakdul lies a little to the north of Abu-Klea.

But here, as everywhere else in the Soudan, the life-giving stream is powerless to nourish anything beyond the spot on which it flows. The waters of the Nile itself are frequently sprinkled with the powdery sand of the mighty deserts which have pushed their borders to within less than a mile of its edge. So, too, with the oasis of Gakdul, or of Abu-Klea. Before the refreshing drops have dried upon your beard you are once more amid the hot, brassy glare and the dead, crushing silence of "the land where all things are forgotten." Waves of burning rock or lifeless sand, wearying your aching eyes with their grim sameness, surge up one beyond another into the dim horizon, while the bleaching bones of a skeleton start from the drifting sands at your feet in gloomy warning of what your own fate may soon be.

Here it is that the fatal "kamsin," or hot wind of the desert, which ill-fated British troops are now encountering a full week before its wonted time, blows in all its fury. In the old Arabian legends one often finds a caliph or pasha impatiently exclaiming at the close of a long winded story, "By Allah, thy talking is worse than the hot blast of the wilderness!" No one can fully appreciate this rough hewn sarcasm who has not been in Arabia or the Nile valley in the earlier weeks of March. Everything looks suddenly dim and blurred, as if seen through a wet pane of glass, and all at once you feel a gust of stifling, prickly heat and a qualm of overwhelming nausea. Your eyes smart and burn, your temple veins throb as if they would burst, your skin seems one vast pincushion filled with red hot needles, and in another moment you are staggering as if stunned by a heavy blow, and groping blindly for any support that you can find, to the utter refutation of the polite Italian proberb that nothing can face the sirocco except 'un porco ed un Inglese (a hog or an Englishman). Woe to any sick or wounded European who meets its destroying blast in mid desert!—*David Ker, in Harper's Weekly*

A Queer Squirrel Yarn.

Old citizens of Toledo distinctly remember the time when there was an emigration of squirrels in this vicinity. On a certain day a gentleman was on the bank of the Ten Mile creek, when the number of squirrels moving was unusually large. Among the squirrels was one that exhibited such motherly care and affection for her two little ones as to prove a most interesting sight. She reached the back of the creek where a crossing was to be made. The little squirrels were quite timid about going near to the water, but the mother coaxed them until they seemed to be satisfied to do as she wished. She ran along the shore, and finding a piece of bark about a foot long and six inches wide, dragged it to the water's edge and pushed it in the water, so that only a small part of one end of the bark was resting on the shore. She then induced her little ones to get on the bark and they at once cuddled closely together, when the old squirrel pushed the bark and its load into the steam, and, taking one end of the bark in her teeth, pushed it ahead of her until the opposite bank was reached, where the young squirrels quickly scampered up the bank of the creek, where the mother rested for a few minutes, when the journey was resumed.—*Toledo Blade.*

A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbors. Every one of his opinions appears to him written, as it were, with sunbeams, and he grows angry that his neighbors do not see it in the same light. He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of low and dark understanding, because they do not believe what he does.

There is no river that presents more sudden and enormous variations than the Nile. For instance, fifty miles below Khartoum its whole volume flows through a canyon just forty yards in width, but the stream is 150 deep at low water. A mile below, the river is three miles wide, full of islands, and so shal low that steamboats often ground.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

A new porcelain, far superior to the famous old Sevres, and identical with that of China, lending itself to artistic decoration and taking all kinds of glazes, has been produced after ten years' experiment, by M. Lauth, of Sevres.

Hermann Wohlfahct, a German instrument maker, has invented a substitute for powder, which he calls explosive paper, and for which he claims that it is more effective than gun-cotton, and will soon take the place of powder altogether. The experiments thus far made by the inventor have been thoroughly successful, and the subject is now put into the hands of German government experts for an exhaustive trial.—*Register.*

It has been suggested that the dark pigment cells which give the color to a negro's skin are anatomically placed in front of delicate nerve terminations, and that the function of the black pigment cells is to lessen the intensity of nerve vibrations that would be caused in a naked human body by exposure to a tropical sun. Thus the pigment plays about the same part as a piece of smoked glass held between the sun and the eye.

The Washington monument has already been turned to a scientific use. Professor Simon Newcomb has been using the top of the monument for measuring the velocity of light, and believes that he has obtained more accurate data for estimating the distance and magnitude of the sun. The velocity of light is measured with a degree of accuracy never before obtained. Professor Newcomb tells a reporter of the Philadelphia *Times* that he thinks the error in his calculations cannot exceed one four-hundred-milionth part of a second.

Dr. J. M. Anders has reached the conclusions that only flowering plants, grown in well-lighted places, generate ozone; and that the most odorous flowers produce the greatest quantity. The ozone attacks the organic matter of the air and by oxidation renders it inert; and Dr. Anders does not doubt that flowering plants in clear weather give off enough of this natural purifying agent to be of hygienic value indoors. Foliage plants, although yielding no ozone, may be of advantage in contributing to the maintenance of a healthful degree of humidity in the atmosphere of rooms.

Rag disinfection is carried on in an air-tight box, into which each bale of rags is drawn by means of five screws, which at the same time make five perforations from end to end of the bale. Superheated steam is injected through the screws, which are hollow and perforated with holes which permits jets of steam to penetrate through the rags in every direction. An escape in the upper part of the box is provided with a bath intended to intercept the passage of any disease germ into the air. Most germs of life are killed at a heat of 212 or 215 degrees, but the steam employed in this process is raised to 330. An exposure of four or five minutes here heats the bale so that it takes two hours for it to fall below the germicide point of 212.

The Scattering of Vast Fortunes.

There are to be no more Vanderbilts Goulds or Astors, and those whom we have already are to be gradually obliterated. That is the theory of an old financier with whom I have been talking, and his arguments are curiously reasonable. There always will be millionaires, but there will be no more one hundred million men. Gould's money will go to his children, of which he has six. He is making every effort to make a business man of his son George. The other Gould boys are not old enough to quit school, but they will doubtless find their way into Wall street, and then they will come in for their share of the fortune when it is distributed. The one thing that Gould loves above money is his family, and he shows no favor to one child over another. If those who know him best can judge, his money will be divided equally between his wife and his children, in the event of his death. The Vanderbilt fortune will, it is understood, be scattered more widely. There are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and of the grandchildren a promise of many more as the years speed on, for the Vanderbilts are given to having large families. Vanderbilt seems to have no desire to perpetuate the family fortune in bulk. He has withdrawn from active business as much as it is possible for a man who has as much money as he has can withdraw, and his only present ambition seems to be to enjoy his declining years and make it cheerful for the others of his family. An even distribution of his one hundred and fifty millions among the twelve to twenty members of his family must render each enormously rich; but it would bring them down to a level with a score or more of other persons in point of wealth. The Astor estate is already divided into two portions. It is plain, therefore, that twenty-five or thirty years hence the three greatest fortunes in New York city at the present day will be scattered. We are living in the time of the greatest development of private fortunes. The conditions of the country will not admit of such chances for money making hereafter as have prevailed in years just gone by. The country has become developed and settled and prospected over too much to admit of new and large fortunes in railroading, mining, in cattle raising or in land speculating. The American who now makes a fortune approaching that of Gould or Vanderbilt must turn his attention to South America, or some other country in which the field has not been worked.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

On the Strike.

"I wish you would give me a dime," said a tramp to Parson Clippinger. "Impudent fellow! you beg, and yet you don't ever take your hat off to me," replied the reverend gentleman. "I hope you will excuse me this time. If I take my hat off that policeman on the corner will suspect me of being a tramp and arrest me, but if I keep my hat on he will think that we are two friends talking over our family affairs."—*Texas Siftings.*

Eggs, in some parts of Montana, are sold at ten cents each, or one dollar per dozen.

The Russian language contains thirty-five letters.

LIFE'S HUMOROUS PHASES.

STORIES TOLD BY MERRY WAGS OF THE PRESS.

Revenging Pa—A Solemn Moment—An American Fable—Typical Western Fertility—Subdued by Size.

'It's a shame that Mr. Blobbs should have treated you so abominably, father."

"Yes, it is a shame, daughter. It's outrageous, it's scandalous."

"Is he a bachelor, pa?"

"Yes, he's a dried up, crusty old bach."

"Oh, well, pa, don't worry then. I'll get even with him for you. You shall be avenged."

"And how?"

"I'll marry him."—*Boston Times*

A Solemn Moment.

After the marriage of Miss Lillian Sniggs, of Dallas, the bridal party partook of a sumptuous banquet, toward the end of which a younger brother of the bride got up, and said solemnly, raising his glass:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have to propose a toast, which, however, must be drunk standing. Please take your glasses and rise up."

The guests, although somewhat bewildered, did so.

"Now," said the young scapegrace, "if you will remain standing for a few minutes I'll find out who has been sitting on my new stove-pipe hat."—*Siftings.*

Fable of the Fox and Woodchuck.

A Woodchuck who had, at great Labor and many Back-Aches, managed to excavate a Hole for Himself in a Hillside, was resting and congratulating Himself when along came a Fox, who said:

"Ah—um! Just Fits me! I've been Looking for just such a Den the last three months."

"You don't mean to Steal my Home away?" queried the Woodchuck.

"Might makes Right in this Blizzard Country, and don't you Forget it! Take yourself off, or I'll make you sad!"

The Fox took Possession, and the Woodchuck withdrew, but next morning he passed that way to find the Fox fast in a Trap at the mouth of the Den. Some boys had Baited for Woodchuck and caught a Fox. As they Appeared on the scene Reynard called out:

"I am but a poor Fox, while you are Learned and Intelligent Human Beings. You have no right to Sacrifice me in this manner!"

"Ah! Yes, but this is a Question of Might instead of Right!" was the Reply, as he was Knocked on the Head.

Moral: "It Ceases to be Funny when Both Sides begin to play the Same Game.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Typical Western Fertility.

The following story of an engineer on a Western railway shows how fast the country is growing. We do not hold ourselves responsible for the truth of the story, but we do not hesitate to say that it is "not much of a story," compared with that told by the Western man who makes an effort:

"One day I was driving my engine over the prairie at the rate of forty miles an hour, without a house in sight, and supposing the nearest town to be thirty miles distant. But as I glanced ahead I was astonished to see that I was approaching a large city. I rubbed my eyes, thinking it was a mirage.

"Jim," says I to the fireman, 'what's this place?'

"Blamed if I know!" says Jim, staring out of the cab. 'I declare, if there ain't a new town growed up here since we went over the line yesterday!'

"'I believe you are right, Jim. Ring the bell or we shall run over somebody!'

"So I slowed up and we pulled into a large depot where more'n five hundred people were waiting to see the first train come into the place. The conductor learned the name of the town, put it down on the schedule, and we went on.

"'Jim,' says I, as we pulled out, 'keep your eyes open for new towns. First thing you know we'll be runnin' by some strange place.'

"'That's so!' says Jim. 'An hadn't we better git one of the brakemen to watch out on the rear platform for towns that spring up after the engine gets by?'"—*Providence News.*

Subdued by Size.

Once upon a time a rather overbearing kind of a man was driving a sleigh along a narrow road, when he encountered another sleigh, also with a man in it, coming in the opposite direction. The occupant of the second sleigh did not appear to be a very large man, covered up as he was with buffalo robes. Hence the surly, overbearing fellow, supposing that he could control the requisite two-thirds working majority on joint ballot, made up his mind not to give half the road. He only took half the road, but then he took it, like the selfish boy in the bed, who took his half out of the middle, thereby compelling his bedfellow to sleep on both sides of him. When the two sleighs got near each other there was a halt and a parley.

"Why don't you give half the road?" asked the supposed weaker party.

"None of your business; only I won't do it—that's all." The reasonable party expostulated, saying that he only asked what was usual and customary, but the overbearing party merely replied, that if the other party did not make room and get out of the way he would run over them.

"Well, then, we might as well make a test question of it at once," responded the party of the second part, taking off his gloves, throwing back the buffalo robes and beginning to rise in his seat, probably to make a motion. He happened to be a very large man, and as foot after foot of his gigantic structure loomed up, the astonished bully exclaimed:

"There, stranger, that will do; don't rise any more, I'll turn out for you." It was his duty and he did. After he had got past the big man, the would-be-bully, as he touched up his off leader, soliloquized:

"Je-e-whilikins, I wonder how much taller that fellow would have got if I had not stopped him."—*Texas Siftings.*

Drunkenness in either the husband or wife is now regarded as a sufficient ground for divorce in France.

JINGLE OF THE RINK.

Hear them prate, prate, prate,
The skater with his mate,
Oh, the skate, the merry, merry skate!
There's many a love—ly story they relate,
As they speed at fearful rate—

'Tis often Cupid seals the fate,
Be sure and save your pate
Ere it shall be too late:
For 'tis so very, very grea
To ride upon the merry, merry skate—
'Tis better far than swinging on the gate.
—*Cambridge Tribune.*

He put on the rollers at seven,
And before the clock sounded eleven,
His feet they went flying,
As if they were trying
To kick out the blue dome of heaven.
—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

I want to be a skater,
And with the skaters glide,
A pair of rollers on my feet,
A sweet girl by my side.

He tried to be a skater,
And bravely he struck out.
* * * * *
The doctor says, "In three months
Again he'll be about."
—*Norristown Herald.*

A daring young lady, named Russell,
Thought she'd give roller skating a "tussle,"
Her skates were erratic—
Her fall was emphatic,
And—her life it was saved by her bustle.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

If you want a fast friend, buy a porous plaster.—*Call.*

It's a poor skater that won't roll both ways, as beginners speedily learn.—*Boston Courier.*

In these times a man can start a sensation in London by stepping on a parlor match.—*Chicago Herald.*

Will England charge the cost of the war with El Mahdi to the prophet and loss account?—*Boston Globe.*

Is it not contradictory to say that soldiers who fire coolly make it hot for the enemy?—*Pittsburg Telegraph.*

The man in Germany who has made and sold 3,000,000 thermometers ought to believe in weather prophets.—*Siftings.*

When Smithy gave his girl the sack the other day, she took it very philosophically. It once covered a seal.—*St. Paul Herald.*

The breath of winter may be cold, but it is not half so cold as the glance of the man you strike for the loan of half a dollar.—*Blizzard.*

An artist who went into the country for the purpose of sketching a bull found there was danger of the bull's catching him.—*Boston Times.*

"Soft words," says a writer of proverbs, "do not scald the mouth." The average dude ought to have a very cool mouth.—*Burlington (Vt.) Free Press.*

"Suppose we have no sugar?" suggests an English magazine. Well, then, we don't see how you could successfully run a political campaign.—*Lowell Citizen.*

We agree with a recent writer that "it's all nonsense to say that eating pies is unhealthy." It is trying to digest them that raises the mischief with one's health.—*Boston Transcript.*

It is said that Japanese women have never seen and do not know the use of pins. When a Japanese man's suspender button comes off he uses a shingle nail or a match.—*Graphic.*

Enfant terrible: "Say, Mr. Snobby, can you play cards?" Snobby: "Why no, Johnny, I can't play very well." E. T.: "Well, then, you'd better look out, for ma says if Emma plays her cards well she'll catch you."—*Life.*

In Boston there's a restaurant
Where no one asks you what you want,
But when you enter there to eat,
As soon as you have a seat
You hear the sprightly waiter call:
"A plate of beans and one fish-ball!"
—*Boston Courier.*

A new dictionary of the Chinese language comprises forty volumes. When a Chinese editor gets stuck on the spelling of a word, he has to delay publication for a week or two in order to consult the lexicon.—*Lowell Citizen.*

Mark Twain has invented a shirt that requires no buttons or studs; and now if somebody will get up a sock that won't give way at the heel and toe we don't see why men folks cannot be moderately happy after all.—*Chicago Ledger.*

"Yes," said pretty Miss Snooks, as she came home from a party at 5 A. M., "I was determined to be the last to leave. I hate that horrid Mrs. Blinks, so I was resolved she shouldn't have the pleasure of slandering me after I'd gone.—*San Francisco Post.*

We observe with pain that the old form of putting the name of a hotel first is going out of style, and that now they put it "Hotel English," "Hotel Anderson," etc. Soon we shall see such signs as "Butcher Shop Jones," "Gin Mill Schwab," and the like. What is the country coming to?—*Derrick.*

A Novel Contest.

The great sword contest on horseback between Duncan C. Ross, the champion all-round athlete of the world, and Sergeant Owen Davis of the United States army, for $500 a side, was decided at Central Park, San Francisco, recently. About 3,000 persons were present. The costumes of the men were those usually worn by wielders of the sword, consisting of an iron coat of mail, and having their heads incased in an iron mask supporting a helmet, on top of which a small flag waved idly in the breeze. The contest, which was very interesting, and at times very exciting, was won by Davis amid tremendous cheering. Ross proved he was a finished swordsman, but the horse being a racer, was frequently unmanageable. The blows exchanged during the affair must have been very severe, as the thick armors showed deep dents on the back and on several parts of the breast it was cut through. Both men looked exhausted after the battle, on account of the bearing of their heavy armor and the trouble which their horses caused them.

A German enthusiast counted the hairs on his wife's head and found 128,000 to the square inch.

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