ACT NOW.

Is there some noble deed that you may do?
Some point to gain on high?
Act now, and thus unto thyself be true,
To-morrow you may die.

Is there some cheering word that you may speak
While day is passing by?
Go, let that precious word the silence break,
To-morrow you may die.

Is there some grievous wrong that you may right,
Or hush some deep-drawn sigh,
Remember, while so swiftly comes the night,
To-morrow you may die.

Go, pour sweet balm into some wounded heart;
Go, wipe some tearful eye;
Let not the act with day depart,
To-morrow you may die.

Yea, go and make your peace with God and man
Ere on your couch you lie;
Secure a crown of life, 'tis wisdom's plan,
To-morrow you may die.

—G. W. Crofts.

AN ARTIST---IN CRIME.

LADY AVELING'S marriage to Lord Aveling was extensively advertised in the papers, the quantity and quality of her wedding presents, and the fact that the honeymoon was to be spent at Hammerpond. The announcement of these valuable prizes created a considerable sensation in the small circle in which Mr. Teddy Watkins was the undisputed leader, and it was decided that, accompanied by a duly qualified assistant, he should visit the village of Hammerpond in his professional capacity.

Being a man of naturally retiring and modest disposition, Mr. Watkins determined to make this visit incog., and after due consideration of the conditions of his enterprise, he selected the role of a landscape artist and the unassuming surname of Smith. He preceded his assistant, who, it was decided, should join him only on the last afternoon of his stay at Hammerpond. Now, the village of Hammerpond is, perhaps, one of the prettiest little corners in Sussex; many thatched houses still survive, the flint-built church with its tall spire nestling under the down is one of the finest and least restored in the county, and the beech woods and bracken jungles, through which the road runs to the great house, are singularly rich in what the vulgar artist and photographer call "bits." So that Mr. Watkins, on his arrival with two virgin canvases, a brand-new easel, a paint box, portmanteau, an ingenious little ladder made in sections, crowbar and wire coils, found himself welcomed with effusion and some curiosity by half a dozen other brethren of the brush. It rendered the disguise he had chosen unexpectedly plausible, but it inflicted upon him a considerable amount of æsthetic conversation for which he was very imperfectly prepared.

"Have you exhibited very much?" said Young Porson in the bar-parlor of the 'Coach and Horses,' where Mr. Watkins was skillfully accumulating local information on the night of his arrival.

"Very little," said Mr. Watkins; "just a snack here and there."

"Academy?"

"In course. And at the Crystal Palace."

"Did they hang you well?" said Porson.

"Don't rot," said Mr. Watkins; "I don't like it."

"I mean they did put you in a good place?"

"Whadyer mean?" said Mr. Watkins, suspiciously. "One 'nd think you were trying to make out I'd been put away."

Porson had been brought up by aunts, and was a gentlemanly young man even for an artist; he did not know what being "put away" meant, but he thought it best to explain that he intended nothing of the sort. As the question of hanging himself seemed a sore point with Mr. Watkins, he tried to divert the conversation a little.

"Do you do figure-work at all?"

"No, never had a head for figures," said Mr. Watkins; "my miss—Mrs. Smith, I mean, does all that."

"She paints, too!" said Porson. "That's rather jolly."

"Very," said Mr. Watkins, though he really did not think so, and, feeling the conversation was drifting a little beyond his grasp, added: "I came down here to paint Hammerpond House by moonlight."

"Really!" said Porson. "That's rather a novel idea."

"Yes," said Mr. Watkins. "I thought it rather a good notion when it occurred to me. I expect to begin to-morrow night."

"What! You don't mean to paint in the open, by night?"

"I do, though."

"But how will you see your canvas?"

"Have a bloomin' cop's—" began Mr. Watkins, rising too quickly to the question, and then realizing this, bawled to Miss Durgan for another glass of beer. "I'm goin' to have a thing called a dark lantern," he said to Porson.

"But it's about new moon now," objected Porson. "There won't be any moon."

"There'll be the house," said Watkins, "at any rate. I'm goin', you see, to paint the house first and the moon afterwards."

"Oh!" said Porson, too staggered to continue the conversation.

"They doo say," said old Durgan, the landlord, who had maintained a respectful silence during the technical conversation, "as there's no less than three p'licemen from 'Azelworth on dewty every night in the house—'count of this Lady Aveling 'n her jewellery. One'm won fower-and-six last night, off second footman—tossin'."

Toward sunset next day Mr. Watkins, virgin canvas, easel, and a very considerable case of other appliances in hand, strolled up the pleasant pathway through the beechwoods to Hammerpond Park, and pitched his apparatus in a strategic position commanding the house. Here he was observed by Mr. Raphael Sant, who was returning across the park from a study of the chalk-pits. His curiosity having been fired by Porson's account of the new arrival, he turned aside with the idea of discussing nocturnal art.

Mr. Watkins was apparently unaware of his approach. A friendly conversation with Lady Hammerpond's butler had just terminated, and that individual, surrounded by the three pet dogs which it was his duty to take for an airing after dinner had been served, was receding in the distance. Mr. Watkins was mixing color with an air of great industry. Sant, approaching more nearly, was surprised to see the color in question was as harsh and brilliant an emerald green as it is possible to imagine. Having cultivated an extreme sensibility to color from his earlier years, he drew the air in sharply between his teeth at the very first glimpse of this brew. Mr. Watkins turned round. He looked annoyed.

"What on earth are you going to do with that beastly green?" said Sant.

Mr. Watkins realized that his zeal to appear busy in the eyes of the butler had evidently betrayed him into some technical error. He looked at Sant and hesitated.

"Pardon my rudeness," said Sant; "but really, that green is altogether too amazing. It came as a shock. What do you mean to do with it?"

Mr. Watkins was collecting his resources. Nothing could save the situation but decision. "If you come here interrupting my work," he said, "I'm a-goin' to paint your face with it."

Sant retired, for he was a peaceful man.

Twilight deepened, first one, then another star appeared. The rocks amid the tall trees to the left of the house had long since lapsed into slumbrous silence, the house itself lost all the details of its architecture and became a dark-gray outline, and then the windows of the salon shone out brilliantly, the conservatory was lighted up, and here and there a bedroom window burnt yellow. Had any one approached the easel in the park, it would have been found deserted. One brief, uncivil word in brilliant green sullied the purity of its canvas. Mr. Watkins was busy in the shrubbery with his assistant, who had discreetly joined him from the carriage-drive.

Mr. Watkins was inclined to be self-congratulatory upon the ingenious device by which he had carried all his apparatus boldly, and in the sight of all men, right up to the scene of operations. "That's the dressing-room," he said to his assistant, "and, as soon as the maid takes the candle away and goes down to supper, we'll call in. My! how nice the house do look, to be sure, against the starlight, and with all its windows and lights! Swopme, Jim, I almost wish I was a painter-chap. Have you fixed that there wire across the path from the laundry?"

He cautiously approached the house until he stood below the dressing-room window, and began to put together his folding ladder. He was much too experienced a practitioner to feel any unusual excitement. Jim was reconnoitering the smoking-room. Suddenly, close beside Mr. Watkins in the bushes, there was a violent crash and a stifled curse. Some one had tumbled over the wire which his assistant had just arranged. He heard feet running on the gravel pathway beyond. Mr. Watkins, like all true artists, was a singularly shy man, and he incontinently dropped his folding ladder and began running circumspectly through the shrubbery. He was indistinctly aware of two people hot upon his heels, and he fancied that he distinguished the outline of his assistant in front of him. In another moment he had vaulted the low stone wall bounding the shrubbery, and was in the open park. Two thuds on the turf followed his own leap.

It was a close chase in the darkness through the trees. Mr. Watkins was a loosely built man and in good training, and he gained hand-over-hand upon the hoarsely panting figure in front. Neither spoke, but, as Mr. Watkins pulled up alongside, a qualm of awful doubt came over him. The other man turned his head at the same moment and gave an exclamation of surprise. "It's not Jim," thought Mr. Watkins, and simultaneously the stranger flung himself, as it were, at Watkins's knees, and they were forthwith grappling on the ground together. "Lend a hand, Bill," cried the stranger, as the third man came up. And Bill did—two hands, in fact, and some accentuated feet. The fourth man, presumably Jim, had apparently turned aside and made off into a different direction. At any rate, he did not join the trio.

Mr. Watkins's memory of the incidents of the next two minutes is extremely vague. He has a dim recollection of having his thumb in the corner of the mouth of the first man, and feeling anxious about its safety, and for some seconds at least he held the head of the gentleman answering to the name of Bill to the ground by the hair. He was also kicked in a great number different places, apparently by a vast multitude of people. Then the gentleman who was not Bill got his knee below Mr. Watkins's diaphragm and tried to curl him up upon it.

When his sensations became less entangled, he was sitting upon the turf and eight or ten men—the night was dark and he was rather too confused to count—standing round him, apparently waiting for him to recover. He mournfully assumed that he was captured, and would probably have made some philosophical reflections on the fickleness of fortune, had not his internal sensations disinclined him for speech.

He noticed very quickly that his wrists were not handcuffed, and then a flask of brandy was put in his hands. This touched him a little—it was such unexpected kindness.

"He's a-comin." said a voice, which he fancied he recognized as belonging to the Hammerpond second footman.

"We've got 'em, sir, both of 'em," said the Hammerpond butler, the man who had handed him the flask. "Thanks to you."

No one answered this remark. Yet he failed to see how it applied to him.

"He's fair dazed," said a strange voice; "the villains half murdered him."

Mr. Teddy Watkins decided to remain fair dazed until he had a better grasp of the situation. He perceived that two of the black figures round him stood side by side with a dejected air, and there was something in the carriage of their shoulders that suggested to his experienced eye that they were bound together. Two! In a flash he rose to his position. He emptied the little flask and staggered—obsequious hands assisting him—to his feet. There was a sympathetic murmur.

"Shake hands, sir, shake hands," said one of the figures near him. "Permit me to introduce myself. It was the jewels of my wife, Lady Aveling, which attracted these scoundrels to the house."

"Very glad to make your lordship's acquaintance," said Teddy Watkins.

"I presume you saw the rascals making for the shrubbery and dropped down on them?"

"That's exactly how it happened," said Mr. Watkins.

"You should have waited till they got in at the window," said Lord Aveling; "they would get it hotter if they had actually committed the burglary. And it was lucky for you two of the policemen were out by the gates, and followed up the three of you. I doubt if you could have secured the two of them—though it was plucky of you, all the same."

"Yes, I ought to have thought of all that," said Mr. Watkins; "but one can't think of everything."

"Certainly not," said Lord Aveling. "I am afraid they have mauled you a little," he added. The party was now moving toward the house. "You walk rather lame. May I offer you my arm?"

And instead of entering Hammerpond House by the dressing room window, Mr. Watkins entered it—slightly intoxicated and inclined now to cheerfulness—on the arm of a real live peer, and by the front door. "This," thought Mr. Watkins, "is burgling in style!" The "scoundrels," seen by the gaslight, proved to be mere local amateurs unknown to Mr. Watkins, and they were taken down into the pantry and there watched over by three policemen, two gamekeepers with loaded guns, the butler and an hostler, until the dawn allowed of their removal to Hazelhurst police station. Mr. Watkins was made much of in the drawing room. They devoted a sofa to him, and would not hear of a return to the village that night. Lady Aveling was sure he was brilliantly original, and said her idea of Turner was just such another rough, half-inebriated, deep eyed, brave and clever man. Some one brought up a remarkable little folding ladder that had been picked up in the shrubbery, and showed him how it was put together. They also described how wires had been found in the shrubbery, evidently placed there to trip up unwary pursuers. It was lucky he had escaped these snares. And they showed him the jewels.

Mr. Watkins had the sense not to talk too much, and in any conversational difficulty fell back on his internal pains. At last he was seized with stiffness in the back and yawning. Every one suddenly awoke to the fact that it was a shame to keep him talking after his affray, so he retired early to his room—the little red room next to Lord Aveling's suite.

The dawn found a deserted easel, bearing a canvas with a green inscription, in the Hammerpond Park, and it found Hammerpond House in commotion. But if the dawn found Mr. Teddy Watkins and the Aveling diamonds, it did not communicate the information to the police.—H. G. Wells, in "The Stolen Bacillus."

Camels in Arizona.

Aboot thirty years ago a number of camels, nearly 150, were brought to Arizona, having been purchased by the United States Government for the purpose of carrying supplies to the regular troops stationed in the Territory. After a thorough trial they were found to be useless, as the gravelly sands of the desert cut their feet, making them unfit for travel.

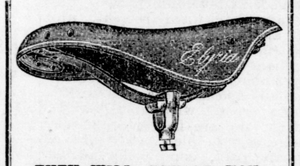
The entire lot was offered for sale and some were purchased, but the larger number were turned loose to graze and roam where they placed. For a while they seemed to dwindle in number, but of late years they have multiplied rapidly and to-day probably 1000 of these animals roam over the desert.

A miner recently counted 518 in one herd on the Gila River, near the White Mountains, and it is known that some graze in the Bradshaws, while a few roam over the hills in Mojave County.—Arizona Gazette.

Five persons are killed daily in the mines of England.

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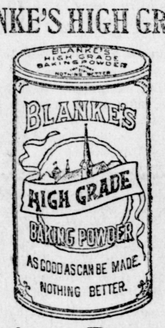
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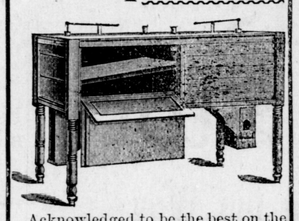
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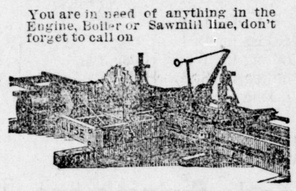
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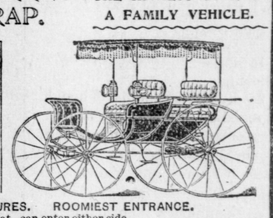
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