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A KISS IN THE DARK.

"Will you be at home to-night, Annie?" The person who asked this question, a tall, muscular, good looking young farmer, was leaning upon Squire Moore's front gate, talking to the Squire's pretty daughter, who stood inside of it. As the simple words passed his lips he reddened suddenly to the very roots of his fair hair, as if he had just been guilty of some great impropriety.

He was bashful—extremely bashful was David Winthrop—at least in the presence of young ladies, most of all in the presence of the girl he loved. No young man in all Wilkes county owned a better kept farm, or talked with more confidence among his cronies of stock and crops and such like. But the sight of a pretty foot or face coming his way affected him queerly. On such occasions he never knew what to do with his hands and eyes and seemed always to feel like screwing himself into the nearest mouse-hole until the danger—that is to say, the young lady—was past.

This state of things being considered, no one ever understood how he contrived to muster up courage enough to enlighten Annie Moore on the subject of his preference for herself. The matter probably remains to this day as much a mystery to him as it is to others.

Miss Annie, however, had a fair share of tact and, womanly cleverness stowed safely away somewhere in the recesses of her pretty little head, although it was carried jauntily upon the inexperienced and rounded shoulders of fresh eighteen.

She did not need to be reminded that David was worth, in a worldly way, much more than any of her other suitors, and that he was good-looking, good-hearted and intelligent enough to satisfy any but an over-fastidious person of her class. He was unexceptionable, in short, barring his unconquerable and excessive bashfulness, which, indeed, was a never failing source of merriment to the young people of their little circle.

And so, when David in his awkward, blundering, half frightened manner began shyly to exhibit his preference for her in various little ways, such as waiting on her to and from singing-school, constituting himself her escort when she went Sundays on horseback to the lonely little church in the words, and singling her out as the recipient of whatever attentions he could find the nerve to pay, at the frequent quilting parties in the neighborhood, Annie did not frighten him out of his budding passion by any show, either by surprise or marked preference, but took it all in the easiest, pleasantest, most unconscious manner possible. The girls tittered and nudged each other's elbows, and the young men cracked furtive jokes at the expense of her timid suitor, but she stood up for him like a real kind-hearted, independent Western lass, as she was, and tried to encourage him out of his shyness as far as she consistently could.

She never seemed to notice any of his unfortunate blunders, and very likely helped him along considerably when his feelings reached the culminating point, one moon-lighted August evening, as they were walking home together from a corn-husking.

That had been just one week ago. Annie had said "yes," and had agreed to take the responsibility of bringing father and mother "around" on the subject. David had not been to the house since. Probably he felt very much like a dog who fears to venture upon the premises of a person whose sheep-fold he had just plundered. Thus it happened that as yet the powers that were knew nothing of the momentous secret, which they kept between themselves, fearing to divulge. And now Annie, who wished to put off the ordeal of avowal as long as possible—at any rate to gain time for one more confidential talk with David on the subject—said hastily in reply to that stammered query of his with which we have prefaced this narration:

"Mother is going over to Aunt Ruth's with father to spend the evening, and she wants me to go, too, but I guess I won't. I've been working on father's new shirts all day, besides doing the dairy work yesterday, and I'm about tired out."

Then she added before he could reply:

"Don't come until 8 o'clock. I shall be about through putting things to rights by that time."

Of course David was not too obtuse to understand that he was specially favored by this arrangement, and he so far forgot his bashfulness as to petition awkwardly for a parting kiss, which was at once refused in the most inexorable manner possible.

"No, you shan't! There, now! *Do* take yourself off, will you? D'ye think I didn't see you fidgeting around Em. Smith at Deacon Anderson's sociable last night! I've not forgotten *that*, sir!"

"Oh, now, Annie! just *one!*"

But further appeal was broken off by a tantalizing little laugh, and when, rendered desperate by this, he tried to revenge himself, at the very moment when he thought he was secure of the coveted bliss and stooped his head triumphantly over his struggling prisoner, the rosy, laughing face vanished suddenly from under his arm and was off and away up the garden path leading to the house almost before he could realize what had happened.

For one moment David, who stood gazing ruefully after her, thought of pursuit and a recapture. But before he had time to put his plan into execution his tormentress, after stopping to give one mocking farewell wave of her hand from the front porch, vanished inside of the hall door. So there was nothing to be done but to turn reluctantly from the gate and taking the road homeward.

If you could have looked into the family sitting room at Squire Moore's shortly before eight o'clock on that same evening you would have had a cheery picture before you. The after supper clearing away was over, for the sitting room was also the room where the daily meals of the family were eaten. The leaves of the old-fashioned dinner table had been let down, and the table itself, covered with a bright oil cloth, set back against the wall. The crumbs had been carefully brushed with a turkey wing from the neat home-made carpet, and Annie's workstand was drawn up in front of the ample and blazing fire of hickory logs which crackled cheerily in the old-fashioned fire-place.

A bountifully piled tray of red-cheeked apples and a plate full of cracked walnuts were on it, in close proximity to Annie's coquettish work basket, made of pine cones by her own deft little hands, and daintily lined with blue silk.

On one side of the fire place sat Mrs. Moore, fat, fair, more than forty, and at peace with all the world. She sat swaying backwards and forwards at intervals in her low rocking-chair, knitting as she rocked, and refreshing herself now and then with a mouthful from a half eaten apple which lay within easy reach, just upon the corner of the table; or touching in a caressing manner with the tip of her foot a sleek, lazy looking gray cat that lay purring and blinking on the hearth rug before her.

Annie sat on the other side of the table delftly drawing her needle in and out of a long piece of white cambric, and with her head as busy as her hands with trying to contrive some clever way of incidentally mentioning the visit, which she was now momentarily expecting, to her mother, without exciting the suspicion of its being a pre-arranged affair. She would have given a good deal to have been able to say in an off-hand manner that she wouldn't wonder if Mr. Winthrop were to drop in, as he was in the habit of calling occasionally on Saturday evening at about this time. But she recollected with a twinge of conscience how hard she had tried to persuade the old lady to accompany her husband on the promised visit to Aunt Ruth's in spite of her forewarnings of a coming spell of 'neuralgy,' which had intimidated her from venturing out into the damp night air; and also how she had plead headache as an excuse for not going herself. She knew that her mother was quite sharp enough to draw her own inference from these two facts and the additional one of her being dressed with more than usual care to spend an evening at home.

'I shall not dare to tell her now,' she said to herself, 'She'd be sure to think that I wanted to get her out of the way, so that I might have David all to myself.' So, like a wise little puss, she was silent.

I'll venture my word on it, you would not have wondered at our bashful young farmer's desperate enthralment if you could have seen Annie Moore as she sat sewing by the fire that frosty night in November. She had, just before supper, indulged in what a Western girl would call 'a fixing up.' A neat-fitting dark chintz dress, looking as fresh as when it first came out of the village store, a dainty white linen collar and cuffs and a coquettish frilled apron of white muslin, and a blue neck ribbon tied in a cunning bow, were the chief items of Annie's toilette. But she looked as sweet and pretty as if hours had been spent in donning satin, lace and jewels. Her rich, wavy, gold-brown hair was carried in shining folds away from her warm red cheeks and caught up in the meshes of a silken net at the back.

Eight o'clock and past! Worthy Mrs. Moore was dozing over her knitting. Her shadow on the opposite wall bobbed about in grotesque mimicry as she nodded to and fro—now crushing the voluminous white satin bows on her spruce cap against the back of her chair—now almost falling forward, while her fat hands at length dropped listlessly in her lap, and her ball of yarn rolled down upon the hearth. Pussy espying it, was soon busy in unwinding and converting it into all sorts of Gordian knots.

All at once a double rap at the door—an audacious double rap—which said 'Let me in!' so loudly and impatiently, and in such a self-assured manner, that Annie, rendered nervous by suspence, started up with a little scream and set her foot on Madame Puss' tail, who in turn gave vent still loudly, to her amazement and displeasure.

All these three combined or rather rapidly successive noises, aroused Mrs. Moore, and she started wildly into an erect posture, rubbing her eyes, settling her cap border, and exclaiming:

'Bless my soul, Annie! What was al that? Somebody at the door? What time is it anyhow, and who can it be? So late as this too!'

'It is not very late, mother. Only a little after eight. I'll go and see who it is,' said Annie, demurely, at the same time taking the one candle from the table.

'No! Here, Annie, you wind up my ball and brush up the hearth while I go to the door. Drat that cat.'

For the old lady's feet were all this while struggling in the perplexing meshes of the ravelled yarn.

In her hurry Mrs. Moore forgot to take the candle with her; and as she stepped out into the small, unlighted front entry, she unwittingly closed behind her the door of the room she had just left. Almost at the same moment she put her hand on the latch of the outer door, and opening it, she suddenly found herself in the ardent embrace of a pair of stout arms. A whiskered face was brought into close proximity with her own, and before she could fully realize her position, she received a prolonged kiss—a hearty smack, given with a significant gusto which indicated that the unknown was taking his revenge for some past slight—paying off some old score; for it said as plainly as words could have done: 'There, take that!' And all this fell upon her unoffending, virtuous matron lips!

'Oh, murder! murder! 'Taint Joshua neither.

For she had by this time divested herself of the impression that it was her usually sober spouse returned home in a strangely exalted condition, thus to indulge in such unwonted demonstrations of conjugal affection. 'Git out! git out, I say! Murder! fire! thieves! Annie! Annie! do come here! here's a man kissin' me like mad!'

But the intruder had by this time discovered his mistake; and it did not need the indignant pummelling and pounding of the old lady's respectable fists to make him relinquish his hold and race off as if pursued by some avenging fury.

Annie, nearly choked with smothered laughter, in spite of trepidation, now came to the rescue.

'Oh, I was never so took aback in all my born days? The mean scamp? Who could it have been? Annie, have you any idea?'

But that dutiful daughter was to all appearance as innocent and ignorant as an infantile dove. She tried to sooth the indignant matron by representing that it might have been (?) one of the neighbors, who under the potent influence of a wee drop too much had mistaken the house and—the housewife! She searched the entry for the missing spectacles, arranged the rumpled cap ribbons, wound up the tangled yarn, stirred the fire—all in the most amiable manner possible—and at last had the satisfaction of seeing her mother subside into her rocking-chair and her usual tranquility of spirit.

But Mrs. Moore was fully awake now.

She had gotten a new idea into her head; and instead of settling herself for another nap, she pursued her train of thought and her knitting, both together, with wonderful rapidity. At length, stopping and looking keenly at Annie over her spectacles, she said:

'It may be a queer notion of mine, Annie, but I've a fancy that man was David Winthrop.'

Oh! but if Annie's face didn't catch fire then! You might have lit any number of candles by it.

These suspicious symptoms did not escape the eye of the skilful inquisitive, who calmly continued:

''Pears so to me; cause them big whiskers put me in mind of his'n; and then the awakward way he gripped me with his big paws!'

No answer. But Annie was wonderfully busy. She bent over her work and ran her needle through so quickly that the thread snapped, and then she didn't have time to talk, she was so taken up with trying to coax the thread through the eye again!

Inflexible Mrs. Moore went on:

'I don't believe that kiss was intended for me after all. Do *you* Annie? Well, of course we know it wasn't. But then I *do* wonder who it was intended for? And I wonder if *you* don't know more about it than you see fit to tell?'

'Me, mother?'

'Yes, 'me mother;' you was mighty anxious to get me and Pap off to Aunt Ruth's to-night; but I noticed you was slicked extraordinary for all you weren't going.'

Here Annie lost her needle and went down on the floor to hunt it.

'Now, Annie,' her mother went on, 'I'm gittin' old, I know that, but I have not quite lost my eyesight yet, nor my hearing neither. I've surmised a little somethin' about these goin's on between you an' David afore now. What ar' you a playin' possum fur? Out with it, I say. 'Taint fair to be tryin' to come it over your old mother.'

Thus adjured our small feminine Machiaval made a clean breast of it, much relieved to find that mother 'hadn't nothin' agin him.' and 'would give father a talkin' to about it an' bring him arougd.'

'But, Annie,' said Mrs. Moore, dryly, in conclusion, 'I want you to tell David I'd rather he'd not make such a mistake again. I don't like the feel of his big whiskers about my face, and moreover, I don't approve of promiskus kissin'!'

David never heard the last of that kiss in the dark. Old Squire Moore, of course, heard of it, and used to take great delight in slyly alluding to the circumstance when all the parties concerned happened to be present. He would shake his sides with laughter at David's discomfiture and his wife's tart replies, while Annie would side with her father and poke sly fun at her sweetheart, and then both of them would laugh again at the other two until the tears ran down their cheeks.

'Never mind, David,' Mrs. Moore would say consolingly to the abashed lover, 'let them laugh. *He'd* have been only too glad to have been in your place thirty years ago. *He* had hard work to get a kiss from me then. I hope the occurrence will be a lesson to you and Annie agin the *nn*-policy of underhand doin's of all sorts, seein' as how they are liable to end, in sich cases, in kissin' the wrong one in the dark.

HOWARD GLYNDON.

A YOUNG HERO.

"Ay, ay, sir: theyr'e smart seamen enough no doubt, them Dalmatians, and reason good, too, seein' they man half the Austrian navy; but they ain't got the seasonin' of an Englishman, put it how yer will!"

I am standing on the upper deck of the Austrian Lloyd steamer, looking my last upon pyramidal Jaffa, as it rises up in terrace after terrace of stern gray masonry against the lustrous evening sky, with the foam-tipped breakers at its feet. Beside me, with his elbow on the handrail, and his short pipe between his teeth, lounges the stalwart chief-engineer, as thorough an Englishman as if he had not spent two-thirds of his life abroad, and delighted to get hold of a listener who (as he phrases it) "has been about a bit."

"No they ain't got an Englishman's seasonin," he continues pursuing his criticism of the Dalmatian seamen; "and what's more they ain't got an Englishman's *pluck* neither, not when it comes to a *real* scrape."

"Can no one but an Englishman have any pluck, then?" asked I, laughing.

"Well, I won't just go for to *say that*; o'course a man as *is* a man 'ull have pluck in him all the world over. I've seed a Frencher tackle a shark to save his messmate; and I've seed a Rooshan stand to his gun arter every man in the batetry, barrin' himself, had been blowed all to smash. But, if yer come to that, the pluckiest feller as ever I seed warn't a man at all!"

"What was, he, then?—a woman?"

"No, nor that neither; though, mark ye, I don't go for to say as how women ain't got pluck enough too, some on 'em at least. *My* old 'ooman, now, saved my life from a lubber of a Portigee as was just a-goin' to stick a knife into me, when she just cracked his nut with a hand-spike. (You can hear her spin the yarn herself, if you likes to pay us a visit when we get to Constantinople.) But this un as I'm a-talkin' on was a little lad not much bigger 'in Tom Thumb, only with a sperrit of his own as 'ud ha' blowed up a man-of-war a'most. Would yer like to hear about it?"

I eagerly assent; and the narrator, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, folds his brawny arms upon the top of the rail, and commences as follows:

"'Bout three years ago, afore I got this berth as I'm in now, I was second engineer aboard a Liverpool steamer bound for New York. There'd been a lot of extra cargo sent down just at the last minute, and we'd had no end of a job stowin' it away and that ran us late o'startin'; so that, altogether, as you may think, the cap'n warn't altogether in the sweetest temper in the wo'ld, nor the mate neither; as for the chief-engineer, he was an easy-goin' sort o'chap as nothin' on earth could put out. But on the morin' of the third day out from Liverpool, he cum down to me in a precious hurry, lookin' as if somethin' had put him out purty considerably.

"'Tom,' says he, "what d'ye think? Blest if we ain't found a stowaway." (That's the name, you know sir, as we gives to chaps as hides themselves aboard outward-bound vessels, and gets carried out unbeknown to everybody.)

"The dickens you have!" says I.—"Who is he, and where did yer find him?"

"Well we found him stowed away among the casks for'ard; and ten to one we'd never ha'twigged him at all, if the skipper's dog hadn't sniffed him out and begun barkin'. Sitch a little mite as he is too! I could a'most put him in my baccy-pouch, poor little beggar! but he looks to be a good plucky un for all that."

"I didn't wait to hear no more, but up on deck like a sky-rocket; and there I did see a sight and no mistake. Every man-Jack o'the crew, and what few passengers we had aboard, was all in a ring on the fo'castle, and in the middle stood the first-mate, lookin' as black as thunder. Right in front of him, lookin' a regular mite among all them big fellers, was a little bit of a lad not ten year old—ragged as a scarecrow, but with bright curly hair, and a bonnie little face o' his own, if it hadn't been so woful thin and pale. But, bless yer soul! to see the way that little chap held his head up, and looked about him, you'd ha' thought the whole ship belonged to him. The mate was a great, hulkin' black-bearded feller, with a look that 'ud ha' frightened a horse, and a voice fit to make one jump through a key-hole; but the young un wasn't a bit afraid—he stood straight up, and looked him full in the face with them bright, clear eyes o'his'n, for all the world as if he was Prince Halfred himself. Folk *did* say arterwards (lowering his voice to a whisper) "as how he comed' o' better blood nor what he ought; and, for my part, I'm rayther o'that way o'thinkin' myself; for I never yet seed a common street-Harab (as they calls 'em now) carry it off like *him*. You might ha' heerd a pin drop, as the mate spoke.

"Well, you young whelp," says he in his grimmest voice, "what's brought you here?"

"It was my step-father as done it," says the boy in a weak little voice, but as steady as could be. "Father's dead, and mother's married again, and my new father says as how he won't have no brats about eatin' up his wages; and he stowed me away when nobody warn't lookin,' and guv me some grub to keep me goin' for a day or two till I got to sea. He says I'm to go to Aunt Jane at Halifax; and here's her address."

"And with that, he slips his hand into the breast of his shirt, and out with a scrap o' paper, awful dirty and crumbled up, but with the address on it right enough.

"*We* all believed every word on't, even without the paper; for his look, and his voice, and the way he spoke, was enough to show that there warn't a ha'porth o'lyin' in his whole skin. But the mate did not seem to swaller the yarn at all; he only shrugged his shoulders with a kind o' grin, as much as to say: "I'm too old a bird to be caught with that kind o'chaff;" and then he says to him: "Look here my lad; tnat's all very fine, but it won't do here—some of these men o' mine are in the secret, and I mean to have it out of 'em. Now, you just point out the man as stowed you away and fed you, this very minute; if you don't it'll be the worse for you!

"The boy looked up in his bright fearless way (it did my heart good to look at him, the brave little chap!) and says quietly: I've told you the truth; I ain't got no more to say.'

'The mate says nothin', but looks at him for a minute as if he'd see clean through him; and then faced around to the men, lookin' blacker than ever.—'Reeve a rope to the yard!' he sings out, loud enough to raise the dead; 'smart now!'

'The men all looked at each other, as much as to say: 'What on earth's a-comin' now!' But aboard ship, o'course, when your'e told to do a thing, youv'e got to do it; so the rope was rove in a jiffy.

'Now, my lad,' says the mate, in a hard square kind o' voice, that made every word seem like fittin' a stone into the wall, 'you see that 'ere rope? Well, I'll give you ten minutes to confess' (he took out his watch and held it in his hand): "and if you dont tell the truth afore the time's up, I'll hang you like a dog?"

"The crew all stared at one another as if they couldn't believe their ears (I didn't believe mine, I can tell ye), and then a low growl went among 'em, like a wild beast a-wakin' out of a nap.

'Silence there!' shouts the mate, in a voice like the roar of a nor'easter. 'Stand by to run forward!' and with his own hands he put the noose round the boy's neck. The little feller never flinched a bit; but there were some among the sailors (big strong chaps as could have felled an ox) as shook like leaves in the wind.—As for me, I bethought myself of my nice little curly-haired lad at home, and how it 'ud be if any one was to go for to hang him; and at the very thought on 't I tingled all over, and my fingers clinched theirselves as if they was a grippin' somebodys throat. I clutched hold of a handspike, and held it behind my back, all ready.

'Tom,' whispers the chief-engineer to me, 'do you think he really means to do it?'

'I don't know,' says I through my *teeth*; 'but if he does, he shall go first if I'swings for it!'

I've been in many an ugly scrape in my time; but I never felt 'arf as bad as I did then. Every minute seemed as long as a dozen; and the tick of the mate's watch regular pricked my ears like a pin. The men were very quiet, but there was a precious ugly look on some of their faces; and I noticed that three or four 'on 'em kept edgin' for'ard to where the mate was standin', in a way that meant mischief. As for me, I'd made up my mind that if he did go to hang the poor little chap, I'd kill him on the spot and take my chance.

'Eight minutes!' says the mate, his great deep voice breakin' in upon the silence like the toll of a funeral bell. 'If youv'e got anything to confess, my lad, you'd best out with it, for your time's nearly up.'

'I've told you the truth,' answers the boy, very pale, but as firm as ever. 'May I say my prayers, please?'

'The mate nodded; and down goes the poor little chap on his knees (with that infernal rope about his neck all the time) and puts up his poor little hands to pray. I couldn't make out what he said (fact, my head was in sitch a whirl that I 'ud hardly ha' known my own name), but I'll be bound God heard it, every word. Then he ups on his feet again, and puts his hands behind him, and says to the mate, quietly: 'I'm ready?'

'And then, sir the mate's hard grim face broke up all at once, like I've seed the ice in the Baltic. He snatched up the boy in his arms, and kissed him, and bust out a cryin' like a child; and I think there warn't one of us as didn't do the same.

'God bless you, my boy!' says he, smoothin' the child's hair with his great hard hand. 'You 're a true Englishman every inch of you: you wouldn't tell a lie to save your life! Well, if so be as yer father's cast ye off, I'll be yer father from this day forth: and if I ever forget you, then may God forget me!'

'And he kep' his word too. When we got to Halffax, he found out the little un's aunt, and giv' her a lump of money to make him comfortable; and now he goes to see the youngster every voyage, as regular as can be; and to see the pair on 'em together—the little chap so fond o' him, and not bearin' him a bit o' grudge—it's 'bout as pretty a sight as ever I seed. And now, sir, axin, yer parding, it's time for me to be goin' below; so I'll just wish yer good-night.'

APPALLING SUICIDE.—A most extraordinary case of self-destruction is reported from Manchester, England. Three clerks employed in some large lead mills in that city were practicing blank firing in the chandelier store room, as was their custom, when one of them named Alfred Roberts, passed his rifle to a fellow clerk named Thomas Walter, and told him to aim at his breast. It appears, however, that Roberts had, unperceived by his companions, loaded the rifle with ball cartridge. Walter took aim as desired, and to his horror Roberts fell dead at his feet, the bullet having passed through his breast. In his hand was found the following letter: "March 4, 1873. I am very glad you have saved me the trouble of shooting myself. I know you are anxious to become a marksman in the corps; perhaps I will be of service to you by making a target of myself. Wishing you success to your first shot, I remain yours respectfully, ALFRED ROBERTS.—Mr. Tom Walter." The reason for Walter complying so readily with Roberts' request to take deliberate aim at his breast is reported to be that it is customary among English volunteers to point their rifles at each other for the purpose of acquiring steadiness of aim. The sooner, we should think, this custom was abolished the better.

SOLOMONS IN THE JURY BOX.—A very remarkable illustration of the value of trial by jury is given by an English paper. At the Devonshire County Sessions two men were charged recently with stealing a copper furnace. It was shown in the evidence that the prisoners were seen near the prosecutor's washhouse, where the copper was. It was also proved that the prisoners together sold it to a marine-store dealer. After consulting for some time the foreman of the jury said they found one man guilty, but could not make up their minds as to the guilt of the other. Whereupon says the Chairman: "Then you must consider it again." Another juror to the foreman: "Take and find one guilty and t'other not guilty." (Laughter.) The foreman: "Yes, yes."

About the best story told lately is of a wealthy New York German and a Hartford livery stable-keeper, who was loth to let his best rig to a stranger. The German was bound to have his ride and agreed to buy the horse and sleigh, and when he returned the stable-keeper might refund the money. This was done, and the team returned and the money refunded when the German started to go. "Hold on," said the man of horses; "you have not paid your horse hire." "Why, my dear sir," said the New Yorker, coolly, "I have been driving my own team this morning."

There is no question about the enterprise of those Western people. A man in Indiana has gone into the business of informing liquor dealers how to evade the penalties of the new law for the small sum of two dollars. His plan is, not to sell any liquor, but to sell tobacco and cigars at a high price, and keep a sideboard of liquors, at which the liberal customer may help himself.

Here is the latest remedy for dyspepsia, and it has the endorsement of the celebrated Dr. Seguard. Instead of abstinence next to starvation, the remedy is to eat often—fifty or sixty times a day—but only a mouthful or two at a time. The food must be of a nourishing character. The theory of the remedy is that ill results always follow the distention of the stomach consequint upon a full meal.

AN ARCTIC REVELATION.

As there is nothing so solemn in nature as the vast desolation that reigns about the North Pole—virgin yet of the presence of intruding foot or sail or any evidence of our human kind—so when we catch vague glimpses of that land of silence, or are enabled to lift the curtain of ignorance that hangs about its outskirts, nothing can more strike the mind with its impressiveness. We all know that in some lonely, ice-bound spot lie the remains of brave explorers—Sir John Franklin and his company—never perhaps to be brought back to the world of green fields and pleasant places. But sometimes the secrets of the far north are unlocked; sometimes the shadow of ignorance which envelops it and hides it from our sight gives way to the light of knowledge, and the world reads a curious story in the revelation.

It has been reserved for Captain Carlsen a Norwegian navigator, to pierce this veil of mystery, in one instance at least, and to make a discovery which, in the recital of it, seems more like a strange fairy tale of the far north than a sober narrative of our prosaic day. While so many brave men are exploring the arctic regions, searching for that North Pole, the geographical phantom which ever allures and ever eludes, a curious interest will attach to his discovery. But in order to approach this subject we must follow a circuitous route—we must go back, nearly 278 years, to a period late in the sixteenth century, about the year 1596, when one William Barentz, a Dutch navigator, sailed away on his second voyage of discovery to trace out, if possible, the north-west passage—that famous imagined highway to Asia by way of the Arctic Ocean the fact of the existence of which so many other navigators have vainly endeavored to realize. Barentz failed in his search, but he discovered Spitzbergen, that vast archipelago which lies in the heart of the Arctic Ocean. He found it expedient to land upon this coast, and there he built huts for shelter and for temporary residence for himself and for his company. Here he tarried during the dreary months of an Arctic winter, and in due course of time abandoned the spot, leaving the huts and their contents, and returned to his own country, never to revisit his quaint settlement.

Three centuries nearly have passed away since that event. The years have come and gone over those silent witnesses to the presence of the ancient mariner and his sturdy crew. In all that time, as we may believe, no living thing has invaded the sacred solitude of this spot haunted with memories of that coming, long ago, of Barentz and his men. Possible, from a distance, the walrus and the seal may have gazed upon it, and from his rapid flight in the ether some arctic bird of passage may have turned a curious eye upon the scene. But no dust has settled there; no moth has stolen in to bring decay. Even the elements seemed to have abated their severity and to have protected with a kindly hand the legacy left to their undivided keeping.

The sequel almost partakes of the character of one of those tales wherewith the princess in the Arabian Nights deferred her threatened and delayed fate by whiling away the tedious eveings of her cruel caliph. One day in the year 1870 Captain Carlsen bore shoreward in his ship to this icy coast of Spitzbergen. He landed at the spot where Barentz had landed before him, and to his perplexed eyes appeared the vision of the old encampment.

The huts were still there, just as Mynheer had left them nearly three hundred years ago. In the rude hearth lay the relics of the utterly dead and long extinguished fire. Upon a shelf were books from the old Dutchman's library—a work on navigation, the latest edition published before he had sailed, and a history of China translated into Dutch. Jugs and dishes, wherein had been prepared the drink and food of the adventurers, were scattered here and there, and even a pair of shoes was found which had belonged to a cabin boy who, as say the records, had died upon the voyage. There were also quaint engravings, and a curious mathematical instrument intended to assist in obtaining longitude. All these articles were carefully collected, and were brought to Europe on Carlsen's return.

There is a touch of the pathetic in this revelation of the long-kept secret of the arctics. It is as pathetic, indeed, as that story of another old Dutch seaman, Mynheer Vanderdecken, whose ship—we have it upon excellent authority of sailors who come to port, and who themselves have witnessed the stranges spectacle—may be seen, at dawn and twilight, in fair weather and foul rushing like the goshtly ship that it is through the startled sea, or beating aimlessly about the approaches to the Cape of Good Hope.

☞ The Michigan Legislature has not only passed a prohibitory law, but one imposing heavy penalties for selling watered milk. Which prompts the Indianapolis *Journal* to inquire "if men are not allowed to put whiskey in their water nor water in their milk, what is water good for?"

☞ The delicate operation of cutting a man open to remove some false teeth that he had swallowed was successfully performed recently, at Pittsburg.

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