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Human Greatness.

The stars are myriad suns that float
Each one a luminous golden mote,
And each within his little place
About the loneliness of space.

They float and drift and swarm and swim,
In human vision faint and dim,
And still beyond our keenest eye
They throng a million other skies.

Imagination fails, and thought
Before the threshold halts distraught
While blackly o'er the spirit brood
The terrors of infinitude.

And what's the earth? A satellite
That whirls about a cosmic mite,
A grain of dust impalpable,
Of which all space is sifted full.

And here's a man upon the earth
Who prides himself on wealth or birth,
Who struts his little breath elate;
And cries: Behold me, I am great!

—[George Horton, in Chicago Herald.

A Plucky Little Woman.

BY CHARLES B. LEWIS.

In the building of the first great trunk line of railroad across the continent upward of 10,000 men were killed by the Indians or met death through sickness or accident. During the first three or four years of train service tramps and toughs and terrors made life a burden for all train conductors, and the small stations were entirely at their mercy. There were plenty of telegraph operators out of a job who could not be induced to take a lone station at any salary, and sometimes the company had to send three men to one station where there was little or nothing for one to do.

Lone Pine station was up in the mountains, just at the east end of a long stretch of snow sheds. It was thirteen miles from Bad Creek to the west and eleven from Big Rock to the east. The names of these stations, together with dozens of others, have since been changed. At the date I write of a man named Clark had the Big Rock station. I had Bad Creek and a new agent and operator had just taken possession of Lone Pine. That station had been vacant for a week. It had been held by a young man named Reed for about three months, but one night he was found dead and robbed—the work of the lawless element then overrunning the West. The first news I got from the new agent came from herself over the wire one day, and this is what she said:

"Allow me to introduce myself as Mrs. Halley, the new agent at Lone Pine. I am just out from Chicago. Charming place this, and I know I shall like it. Hope to become better acquainted."

I found out later on that she was a widow about 26 years old, good looking, well educated, and possessed plenty of courage and common sense. Just why she didn't do as most other young widows do was no one's business but her own. Finding that she must earn her own living, she learned telegraphy and came down the road in search of a place. They didn't want to give her the station at Lone Pine, but she was so persistent that she was finally installed. As at many other stations, she had to gather her own firewood and cook her own provisions, and there were many annoyances to be encountered.

Clark and I were both knocked out to find that a woman had been sent to Lone Pine. Had it been a man we should have expected him to take care of him elf, but as it was we couldn't help but worry. There was hardly a day that we didn't have to drive some tough out of our houses at the muzzle of a shotgun, and both of us had twice been held up and cleaned out by gangs. Her station was even more isolated, and though her sex might be respected by some, there were men abroad as wicked as the old-time pirates. In response to our inquiries she assured us that she had been provided with the regular outfit of weapons by the company, and that she should not hesitate to shoot if she found it necessary.

It was in May when the little woman took possession. In describing her I did not say that she was little, but such was the fact. Her weight was not over 100 pounds, and she looked more like a girl of 16 than a woman of 26. I got a chance to run up and see her one afternoon in the month, and found her nicely settled. She had been more or less annoyed by roughs, but there had been no occasion to test her nerve as yet. I found her doubled-barrelled shotgun loaded with buckshot and her navy revolver ready for business, and she assured me that she should not hesitate to fire upon any man who menaced her safety.

I went home much relieved in mind. Outside of the fraternal feeling so strong outside of the brotherhood of the key, there was something in the thought of that little woman being perched up there alone among the grim hills and wild forests calculated to keep a man awake when he should have been sound asleep in his cot. The first alarm came one night early in July. In the forenoon of that day two very rough-looking men had come up the track from the west. They halted at my station, sized me up, and then demanded something to eat. I might have given them a bite had they requested instead of demanded; but when I saw that they meant to pick a quarrel and have an excuse for assaulting and robbing me, I brought out the shot-gun and obliged them to walk on. As soon as they were out of sight I notified the little woman at Lone Pine to look out for them. She replied that she would, and up to 10 o'clock at night I heard from her every hour, but the tramps had not put in an appearance. It was 11.30 o'clock and I was sound asleep when I heard Lone Pine call me over the wire. I rolled off my cot and ran to the instrument and asked what was wanted.

"The tramps are here," was the reply.

"They are knocking on the door and asking for food and shelter."

"But don't let them in. Get down your shotgun, lay it across the table with the muzzles pointed at the door, and if they break in pull both triggers!"

"They are cursing me and declaring they will set the cabin on fire if I don't open the door," telegraphed the little woman a moment later.

"If you open the door they will murder you! You have a sliding window to the right of your door, if I remember right?".

"Yes."

"Take your revolver, slide the sash back, and fire upon the fellows."

"But I may kill one of them!"

"That's what you want to do—both, if possible! If you show any fear of them they will batter the door in, and then God help you!"

"It's awful to shoot"—

Then came a break. I knew that the fellows were making some demonstrations which obliged her to act, and during the next sixty seconds I heard every beat of my heart. Then came the tremulous message:

"I—I've shot one of them, and what—what—shall I do about it?"

"Did you fire from the window?"

"Yes."

"Don't do anything except wait and watch. If you've hit one the other will likely make off. If he tries to get in, however, give him the same dose. Do you hear him about?"

"No; I think he's moved off, but the one I shot is groaning and taking on awfully."

"Let him groan. You'll have a train from the east in 55 minutes. Keep me advised."

I had two more messages before the the train reached her. One was that the man had ceased to groan and was probably dead, and the other was that the other tramp had tried to burst open the door, but had been driven off by her firing one barrel of her shotgun into it from her side. When the train rolled in a dead man was found at the door and a wounded one lying on the ground a few yards away. There wasn't any inquest on the dead. The body was carried a few miles west and dropped into a gulch, and the wounded man, who had a dozen buckshot in his shoulder, was turned over to the first sheriff. The little woman's adventure made her a heroine for many weeks, and I was not mean enough to let on that I had been obliged to brace her up and direct operations for a distance of thirteen miles.

Everything went well at Lone Pine until the 13th of September. This fall there was a regular army of tramps headed for the West, and the employes of every passenger and freight train had to be armed to the teeth. In some instances the gangs took possession of freight trains and ran them to suit their own convenience. The number of trainmen killed or wounded every week was something astonishing. On the 13th a gang of twenty tramps seized a freight train at a water tank twenty miles east of Big Rock and and ran it to the station. There happened to be a big construction gang at Big Rock, and they turned to and overpowered the tramps and scattered them in every direction. It began raining at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and when night fell it was as dark as pitch. At 8 o'clock a train loaded with bridge material and accompanied by twelve mechanics reached my station from the west on its way to Big Rock.

Just as it came in I got word from Clark over the wire that a landslide had occurred between him and Lone Pine and no trains would be able to pass it before next day. This, you will observe, put Lone Pine off on the east, and it held the bridge train at my station. I turned in about 11 o'clock, with the rain coming down as if everything was to be drowned out, and it was just half an hour after midnight when I was called by the little woman at Lone Pine.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," she said, "but I fear I'm going to have trouble."

"What's wrong?"

"A number of those tramps who were bounced at Big Rock today have reached here and taken possession of two empty freight cars on the siding. The whole crowd is half drunk and raising Cain."

"If they have shelter and something to drink they won't be apt to bother you tonight. However, I'll sit up with you for a while for company's sake. Are your firearms loaded?"

"Yes. The gang appears to have four or five revolvers, and two bullets have been fired through the window."

"Well, don't show any light, and you had better bunk down on your cot. The fellows will get over their hilarity pretty soon."

It was five minutes before I heard from her again. The engine of the freight train was standing almost opposite the door, and during the interval I went out and roused the sleeping engineer and fireman and told them what was going on at Lone Pine. If things got desperate with the little woman I proposed to take half a dozen of the mechanics and go up to her relief. When she called me again she said:

"One of the gang has routed me up and demanded whiskey and something to eat. When I ordered him away he made threats of what they would do."

"Don't get shaky," I replied. "It's probably a bluff. Construction No. 8 is lying here, and in case you need help a lot of us will come up on the engine. We'll have a clear road and can make it in fifteen minutes."

It was seven minutes before she called again. The locomotive had been fired up, and the fireman had gone back to the caboose and routed out six men who had revolvers, and they were ready to make a dash with us.

"You remember the old caboose car at the end of the side track?" queried the little woman at Lone Pine.

"Yes."

"Well, they have made a bonfire of it, and it's blazing away even in this rain. There are fourteen of the fellows and the toughest lot I've ever seen. I think they mean to attack the house. Hadn't you better come up?"

"I don't want to take the responsibility unless it is positively necessary. You are expected to stand them off if you can. No one will blame you if you wipe out the whole gang. Talk right up to them if they come to the house."

Three or four minutes slipped away, and then she announced that they had given her five minutes in which to surrender, and that one of the empty freight cars had been fired.

"They can't set fire to the house with the water falling like this," I replied. "You have a stout shutter at the window, and they can only attack by way of the door, if at all. They can't shoulder it in with two bars across it, and if they bring up a battering ram you want to fire on them through the lower panels."

What was to be the last message came about ten minutes later.

"They brought up a beam," telegraphed the little woman, "and I gave them the buckshot through the lower panels. I think I hit three or four. Some of them are now firing into the house, while others are bringing up firebrands to burn me out."

"Coming—don't give up!" I rattled off to her, and thirty seconds later the engine was moving away with our crowd. We had a wet track, but a clear run, and after the first two miles we simply flew. We had some fear that the fellows might have turned the switch or pushed a freight car down on the main track, but no such idea had occurred to them. We went through two miles of snow sheding like a rocket shooting along a tube, and when we popped out at the eastern end we were among the tramps. The two cars were blazing away, and a fire had just been started in a third. Firebrands were piled up against the house at three different places, and three or four fellows with revolvers were blazing away at the door and window.

Before the engine had come to a stop we dropped off and began shooting to kill, and in five minutes we had cleaned out the gang. Perhaps you remember the way that certain newspapers pitched into us about that affair, calling it a massacre, and howling for our arrest. There were four killed and seven wounded. Three men were hit when the little woman fired through the door. I know what became of the killed, for I helped to bury them, but the wounded were taken East that afternoon.

When the little woman opened the door to us she had her revolver in her left hand, because one of the stray bullets had passed through the palm of her right. She had also been grazed on the shoulder, and two bullets had passed through her clothing. She had fired both barrels of the shotgun and eleven bullets from the revolver, and was doing bravely when we turned the scales. And did she continue at Lone Pine? Oh, no. A division superintendent fell in love with her, aroused the tender passion in her breast, and away she went to settle down on the Pacific slope and became a nobody—that is, she couldn't be a heroine any more.—[New York Sun.

Methods of Vultures.

In the month of December, as our party were ascending the gorge which leads to Petra from the Wadee-el-Arabah, one of our camels suddenly dropped down dead. This was in the evening, and we returned to our camp without succeeding in our object that day. But early next morning we started again for Petra, and on reaching the carcass of the dead camel in the early dawn we found about a dozen vultures congregated around it, some of which had already gorged themselves and were almost unable to fly. Now, when the camel dropped down, none of these birds were in sight; but here next morning, while the carcass was quite fresh, they had swooped down on their prey. There could have been no smell of carrion from this carcass; but it might easily have been within sight of a bird soaring at an elevation which would have rendered it invisible to a traveler; at the same time, an animal of the size of a camel lying motionless on the ground would have been easily visible to a vulture while out of sight.

In order to account for the assembling of a group of vultures in so short a time as is here indicated, while none of these birds were apparently within sight, we may suppose that the birds spread themselves at wide intervals throughout an extensive district and at a high altitude; each bird soars about, keeping a steady gaze on the ground for the carcass of some animal, at the same time being within sight of his fellows. As soon as prey is sighted by one of the group he swoops down toward it, and this action is a signal to the other birds that a meal is to be had where the bird descended, and they all flock down accordingly. "Wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together."—[The Spectator.

A Voting Machine.

A mechanic of Rochester, N. Y., named Myers, has perfected an automatic electrical voting machine applicable to the Australian method, which, predicts the Boston Transcript, is, perhaps, destined to remove the only defects of that otherwise admirable system. It is simply a mechanical electrically controlled device for recording votes; all the voter needs is the name of the candidate whose election he desires, together with the ability to read, the power to distinguish color or the sense of touch. As everybody possesses at least one of these three latter requisites, it is safe to say that any man who knows for whom he wishes to vote can do so without the possibility of a mistake. This ballot machine is a sheet steel booth, five feet square and seven feet high. One foot of space is set off for the secret mechanical counters by a solid steel partition. The voter knows the standard designating color of his party ballot; he has examined the nominations published in newspapers and on the chart at the polls. After qualifying, the voter enters the ballot machine. If the voter is illiterate he pushes in the nobs having the same color as his party ballot. Has done so he simply goes out of the exit doors. Opening the outer exit doors returns the knobs in readiness for the next voter. When the polls close the count is made and registered plainly in figures. The first trial of this machine was made at Lockport, N. Y., and the way in which it superseded brains and watchfulness led to its almost immediate adoption in numerous sections of this State.

Gallantry Wins.

"I do not ask you for much," he said.

"You ask my hand," she replied.

"Yes, but it is so small, it seems like asking nothing."

With a pretty blush, she placed it in his.—[New York Press.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

THE WINTER'S TRIBUTE.

"Heigho! Heigho!" cried the flakes of snow,
As down from the sky they flew;
"On a moonlight night we're a pretty sight,
With the clouds above so blue.

"Heigho! Heigho!" cried the north wind,
"I can outrival you, snow!
I can turn your flakes into icy cakes,
If such is my will, you know."

"Heigho! Heigho!" cried the angry wind
"You're too conceited today;"
So he blew a blast as he swiftly passed,
And swept them all away.

—Annie Campbell Heustis, in N. Y. Independent.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE BOOTBLACK.

During the troubles in South America last fall, in which the United States of Colombia was involved, a dirty and ragged bootblack presented himself one day at the gate of the President's palace at Bogota. He was ordered to move on, but insisted with such ardor upon seeing the President that a messenger finally told that dignitary of the boy's request.

"Let him come in," was the order. "What do you want?" asked the President, as the bootblack entered.

"Your protection, Mr. President," answered the boy.

"And protection for whom?"

"For myself and companions."

"But I do not know you, nor do I know who your companions are, nor what protection you seek."

"Mr. President, said the boy, paying in a bold attitude, "I am a poor bootblack, and my companions are of the same calling; we shine boots and sell newspapers, and with what we earn we feed and clothe ourselves, and as far as we can assist our families. At other times the same thing has been said as today, but no one has dared to make a complaint, and if there was a newspaper that would do it the facts would be denied by some official; but today they can't deny what is taking place."

"And what is taking place?" interrupted the great man.

"We are being taken as recruits, Mr. President."

"But, my boy, there is no recruiting going on now."

"We are not recruiting for the army, Mr. President, but we are tied and carried to work on coffee plantations. Even at this moment thirty of my comrades are leaving Bogota under an escort for either Tolima or Fosagasuga."

The President made inquiries, and immediately took steps to remedy the wrong.

This story reminds one of the Boston boys who called upon General Gage during the British occupation in 1768. They were in the habit of building snow forts on the Common, and the British soldiers smashed these toy fortifications in order to tease the boys. This interview is historic.

"We come, sir," said the spokesman of the party, "to demand satisfaction."

"What?" exclaimed General Gage, "have your fathers been teaching you rebellion and sent you to exhibit it?"

"Nobody sent us," replied the lad, indignantly. "We have never insulted nor injured your soldiers, but they have trodden down our snow-hills and broken the ice in our skating-pond. We complained. They called us rebels, and told us to help ourselves if we could. They laughed at us. Yesterday our works were destroyed again, and we will stand it no longer."

General Gage was so pleased with the manly boys that he ordered the soldiers to cease molesting them, adding, to an officer, "The very children here draw in a love of liberty with the air they breathe."—[Harper's Young People.

Geography in the Moon.

Sir Robert Ball is reported to have said, in his lecture on the moon, that the geography of our satellite was better known even than that of the earth. There was no single spot on the moon the size of an ordinary parish in England that had not been fully photographed and observed. Of course this remark can only relate to the side of the moon which is always turned towards us. Nearly one-half of her surface has never been seen by mortal eye, and never will be, unless the lunar globe should be tilted by collision with a comet or some such erratic body. Otherwise it is a fact that photography has done more for the earth attendant than for the earth itself. It is analogous to the further fact that the only thing which man can predict with certainty are not those that happen on the sphere he inhabits, but the movements of worlds immensely distant.—[London Telegraph.

A FAMOUS ROOM.

The Vice-President's Office in the National Capitol.

Interesting Relics Found in the Historic Apartment.

In the Senate wing of the Capitol at Washington there are two rooms set aside as offices for the President of the United States and the Vice-President of the United States. The former room is by far the handsomer of the two, but it is little used as an office. The latter, however, though not as pretty as the President's, is a very beautiful room. It is used daily as the office of the Vice-President while the Senate is in session, and it contains some very interesting relics.

It is large and square, with stucco ceiling and tinted walls, and is situated just at the end of the Senate lobby. Its furniture consists of a very beautiful, centre-tinted carpet, five large chairs, including a rocking chair, upholstered in dark green leather, two flat top rosewood tables and an office desk. There is also a large sofa, fire-screen, drop-lights, etc.

The fireplace is of the old style—wood being used as fuel entirely. Just between the Vice-President's seat at the centre table and the fireplace is the large screen and this serves to throw off the heat but still does not spoil the effect of the burning ancient logs. The large brass fender around the fire used to protect the carpet from the sparks is a very elegant affair, and it has been the custom for many years to give to the retiring Vice-President this fender with its accompanying poker, tongs, etc.

In the right hand corner as you enter the room is a small safe upon which is marked in gilt letters "Vice-President of the United States." This safe is used as a repository for the electoral votes as they come from the different states just after election until they are counted in the House of Representatives. The custom prevails and probably will always prevail, that during the period when the electoral votes are within the safe, two officers of the Capitol police force are detailed to watch them night and day, and they are so vigilant that even the Vice-Presidents private secretary is not admitted to the room without one of the officers accompanying him. The combination of the safe is at that time known only to the Vice-President then holding the position as President of the Senate.

The former entrance to the Vice-President's chamber, just outside of the lobby, has been for some years closed, and the little alcove made thereby is now used as a wash-room. This little place contains one of the most interesting relics in the room. It is a small mirror, two and one-half feet long by eighteen inches wide, and was purchased by the Senate for John Adams, the first Vice-President of the United States, who was on the ticket with Washington. It has a very ordinary gilt frame and is made of poor material. Still, it caused a great controversy in the Senate at the time of its purchase, some of the Senators objecting to the price, which was $10, saying that that amount was entirely too much for the Government to expend for a mirror, even for the Vice-President, but after a lengthy and interesting debate, it was decided to buy it. The mirror has received every care and is now almost in perfect condition, having been for the last fifty years in the care of the venerable Captain Bassett. Another article in the little wash-room is a very beautifully carved toilet case. This cabinet is of ebony and was made for Vice-President Chester A. Arthur by special request.

Upon the right wall, looking from the entrance, is a painting of George Washington, considered the best of Washington in existence. It was executed by Rembrandt Peale in 1796. Peale had three sittings of Washington, and at that time dentistry was not practised so scientifically as at the present day, and it is a historical fact that at each of the sittings Washington used raw cotton as a substitute for false teeth so as to fill out the mouth and cheeks. This adds great value to the portrait, as it gives his face a determined look, which was very natural in Washington.—[New York World.

A Heartfelt Desire.

Young Wife (who dotes on bric-a-brac)—What this house needs is something really antique, don't you think so?

Young Husband—Yes, indeed, my love. Why don't you have 'em?

"Have what?"

"Old-fashioned pumpkin pies, you know."—[New York Weekly.

Life and Death.

I.

What is life?
A round of cares;
Filled with joy; whelmed with tears;
Part weal—part woe;
Darkened days, and days aglow—
A dirge—a song;
A ceaseless fight 'twixt right and wrong;
This is life.

II.

There is naught, such as men call death.
What we so fear
Is but the ceasing of the earth-breath;
The breathing in a purer clime,
The balmy air
Of Heaven's eternal summer-time.

—E. Hoffman Batten, in Ram's Horn.

HUMOROUS.

A learned man is a nobody.

An old-timer—Your great-grandfather's clock.

"What do you do in school, Polly?" asked Polly's aunt. "Wish I was at home," said Polly.

"Hoh!" sneered Marty, "of course horses can run faster than boys. They've got twice as many legs."

The business man who trusts out everything he sells will eventually be driven to the necessity of resting on his owners.

A man addressed a passionate love letter to a lady, adding postscript: "Please send a speedy answer; somebody else is in my eye.

Young Prettywilde—Doctor, I am suffering from insomnia. Can you suggest a remedy? Dr. Squills—Certainly. Don't stay up all night.

"Margaret" was the way her name
Appeared in her youthful copy-books
long;
In society's columns we see the same
Girl figure quite gaily as "Marguerite."

George—I am so nervous that I don't believe I could get married unless I had somebody to stand by me. Horrisee—Well, George, I will stand by you.

Young Tutler—Do you mind my calling on your daughter, Mrs. Simpson, in a business suit? Mrs. Simpson—No, Mr. Tutler, not if you really mean business.

Marie—Charlie Dabrie is an easy-going fellow, don't you think? Claire—Well, no. He comes to see me about one evening a week and I have found him quite different. He's a stayer.

The Editor—Take that chair, Miss Bostin. Miss Bostin (with a roll of manuscript)—Thank you! I will not take the chair, but I will be glad to occupy it when I read you my poem on icicles.

It is discouraging to a newly-married man to scar his conscience praising his blushing little wife's first cake and then have her tell him that she got it at the baker's when she went down town.

Remembering the Teachers.

The school children of Grass Valley, California, have a custom that is far more commendable than any one that prevails in this city of making presents to teachers. Instead they bring to school a stick of wood or a paper bag of potatoes. These are taken charge of by the Ladies' Relief Society and distributed among the poor. This year the people of the town joined with the school children and a large procession, headed by a band of music, was formed. Men bearing sacks of flour, billets of wood or something of use were in line, as were also the delivery wagons of the merchants, which were filled with all sorts of articles, including provisions, boots, shoes, clothing, blankets, etc. There were also ten wagons in the procession loaded with cord wood. All of the articles were taken charge of by the organization above mentioned, and it is a pretty safe assumption that no one in Grass Valley will feel the bite of extreme want for some time to come.—[San Francisco Chronicle.

Which Way the Moon Was Going.

There is a little boy in this town, a five-year-old, that they call Johnny. Johnny had been told that the moon goes around the earth, and the other night he was out making astronomical observations. Pretty soon the little fellow came running in and said:

"Oh, mamma, I saw the moon going round the world."

"Did you, dear?"

"Yes. I saw it run up past two clouds."

"And which way was it going?"

"It was going down Thirteenth street.—[Kansas City Journal.

Not a Freak.

Little Lottie—Was you ever in a museum, Miss Tweezer?

Miss Tweezer—No, dearie; why?

Little Lottie—Well, ma said you was awful two-faced.—[Chicago Inter-Ocean.