

THE HEADLIGHT.

A. ROSCOWE, Editor & Proprietor.

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LIFE AND DEATH.

What's for the babe?
Why, mother's eyes,
Two patches of those summer skies
That beamed on him in Paradise.
What's for the child?
With fays to skip,
To taste the honeysuckle's lip—
The butterfly's companionship.
What's for the boy?
The haunted world,
The squirrel's nest in leafy hold,
The rainbow's fabled pot of gold.
What's for the youth?
To dream of fame,
In shifting sand to write his name,
With sighs to fan a passion's flame.
What's for the man?
Courage to bear
The load of wisdom and of care,
And some true heart its weight to share.
And what's for age?
Fain's prison bars,
Comfort that every trifle mars,
Pinness and fear—and then the stars!
—George Horton, in Harper's Weekly.

A SPOT OF INK.

I was seven or eight years since I had seen my friend George Brevil when I met him one day at the Bois de Boulogne, in the Avenue des Acacias. We shook hands, and, as we were talking over old times, a little Italian beggar, carrying an

accordian, came up to ask alms.

"Get away with you!" cried George, with a brutality that shocked me.

"Why, old fellow," I said, as the little girl ran off confused and frightened, "You were not always so hard on the poor. It seems to me that we even thought you soft-hearted!"

"I had not seen life in those days," he answered, with a sardonic smile. "I know now that existence is a struggle for all classes. Besides, kindness is weakness, a morbid condition, a beginning of brain-softening. That is a scientific fact, a recognized fact, and for my part, I believe that kindness leads—"

"Leads to its own reward?"

"No; to a lunatic asylum, or the poor house."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"Would you like a page from my own experience? Ten years ago, while was still in my teens, I was studying law, and lodged as you know on Rue Racine. One winter evening, when it was snowing, I was about to enter my home in company with Andre Filasac—do you remember him?"

"Perfectly. He used to carry tales at school, and he died of jaundice, didn't he, when one of his brothers fell heir to a fortune?"

"That's the man. Well, we were at the front door, when I saw a child lying across the threshold, a little Italian like the one who begged just now with an accordion slung around her neck. She had fallen asleep on the snow, and the snow lay white above her, and was growing deeper every minute. Of course she was in danger of freezing to death. With the greatest difficulty we awoke her, and then she began to cry and said she was afraid to go back to her master. For as she had not the fifty sous he required her to bring daily, she was sure he would beat her. There was no use in our giving her the money and sending her away, for her eyes were closing with sleep, and we knew that she would lie down again and never awake. We looked about for a policeman, but there was not one within sight. I said something about taking the child up to my rooms."

"Don't do that, replied Andre. You know nothing about this little vagabond. You will only be the dupe of your own charity."

"Just like Filasac," I interrupted.

"He was not sympathetic; but he had good sense. However, I took no heed of his observations, but led the girl upstairs, warmed her by a good fire, and gave her some tea and biscuits. I let her sleep in my own bed, and I slept myself on an old lounge in my little ante-chamber."

"You did well, George!"

"Wait a minute. The next morning, when I rose, I found the child up and dressed. She bid me good-by, thanking me prettily, and I sent her away with a gold piece in her hand. But, after her departure, I found my room in horrible disorder. She had rummaged through everything. Worse than that, she had stolen one of my handkerchiefs."

"A handkerchief?"

"Yes—a hideous, ridiculous, red embroidered object, sent me by my aunt, Mme. de Kermadec. It was a present I kept piously, but never used."

"A small loss, then. No! What of it?"

"What of it? The theft had dreadful results for me. My aunt came to Paris. She asked why I never used the handkerchief she had embroidered for me. I grew embarrassed, hesitated, tried to explain and contradicted myself. She insisted that I had given it away. She grew angry and refused to be pacified. She died and disinherited me!"

"Poor George!"

"It makes you laugh? I don't think it funny myself. And since then everything has gone against me. I am a lawyer without a client. I placed myself with a banker who absconded, and, to crown my misfortunes, I have fallen in love!"

"Then, why don't you get married?"

"Impossible! She is a princess!"

"Oh! then—"

"Look! yonder she goes!" exclaimed my friend. "Do you see that lady near the old gentleman with white whiskers and a hooked nose? She is here at this hour every day—our eyes have met—and judge of my folly! It seems to me that there is something singular—marked—in the way she looks at me."

"Why, that is the Princess Olga Dragomiroff."

"You are acquainted?"

"Very well acquainted. Her grandfather is the millionaire Neapolitan banker Ghirolandi. There is to be some grand 'tra-la-la' to-morrow afternoon at their house—a musicale, followed by a dance. Shall I present you?"

"Could you?"

"Nothing easier. Our families are very intimate. Ghirolandi's friends are our friends."

"Then I shall be delighted—too delighted—to accept. But what's the use, since I love without hope?"

"Who knows? Princess Olga is rather eccentric. She is, perhaps, capable of taking a fancy to you."

"Thanks—much obliged."

"Don't be vexed. Will you go with me?"

"Yes, I will go."

Olga and her maternal grandfather, the immensely rich Orlando Ghirolandi, lived at Paris in a fine house on Rue de la Boetie. They moved in the most select circles and entertained with magnificence.

People sometimes wondered why the princess did not marry. Everyone agreed that she was virtuous, charitable and devout, after the manner of Russians, who still keep a certain depth of mysticism in spite of the friction of nineteenth century cynicism.

But the young lady was odd in the very limits of eccentricity, even, some people said, to the limits of rudeness. She was a good musician and played well on the violin. But, after exorcising some classical concerto so as to excite the admiration of connoisseurs, she would dash off into an absurd refrain of a popular melody and would seem delighted with the annoyance of her audience. When she went out walking with her grandfather, or her prim English companion, she never failed to stop the little street musicians and ask them a torrent of outlandish questions in an outlandish Italian patois she had learned dear knows where. One of her most unaccountable eccentricities was that she persisted in appearing everywhere, even in a ball dress, with an embroidered handkerchief bearing initials not her own, and stained with a spot of ink that was beginning to turn yellow. One of two of her most intimate friends had ventured to ask her why she carried such a strange object, and she had answered very gravely: "Hush! it has a history!"

She treated all remonstrances with indifference, even those of her grandfather, who spoiled her. Pretty and rich, the singular little princess might easily have made a good match; but she declared that there was only one man in the world she would marry, and that it was extremely unlikely he would ever ask her hand.

Affairs were thus, when I received Signor Ghirolandi's permission to present my friend George Brevil. George was already very much in love. Olga received him prettily and granted him the waltz he begged. But although he was said to be the most graceful man in Paris, he behaved like an awkward

schoolboy, and was so afraid of saying anything foolish that he scarcely opened his mouth.

"Mademoiselle," he remarked at last, "the more I look at you the more certain I feel that I have seen you somewhere—that we have met before."

"You are right," she answered seriously; we have met before, and if we ever grow well enough acquainted I may tell you where."

"Won't you tell me now?"

"No; not yet."

"Is this the mysterious handkerchief that is supposed to be your fetish?" he queried. "May I look at it? It reminds me of one I lost under peculiar circumstances."

She drew it gently away, turning it so that the initials could not be seen. "Some other time," she said, "I may tell you all about it."

George had to wait her good pleasure; but his curiosity was piqued, and he thought of little beside the charming princess.

One day, some weeks after, he repeated his questions and pressed for a reply. "Tell me," he said, "where have we met before?"

Olga seemed strangely embarrassed. She colored deeply, looked down and twisted a corner of her hideous handkerchief. Then, raising her clear, candid eyes to his she answered: "It was in your room, don't you remember? Take this, and then you will know." She held out the handkerchief. "Don't you recognize it?" She added: "Those are your own initials."

"It is mine! my handkerchief! Then that little beggar—was it, could it be—!"

"It was I."

"You are joking?"

"Not at all. My history is extraordinary, perhaps, but not impossible. My father, Prince Dragomiroff, left Russia under the Czar's displeasure. He went to Naples and married the daughter of the banker Ghirolandi. After I was born, my parents purchased a villa in Sicily, and when I was eight years old I was stolen by brigands, of whom there are still a number in Sicily. They sold me to a man who dealt in street musicians, who treated me very cruelly. I was with his band for some years, and developed so much talent for the accordion that I was well beaten if I failed to bring back fifty sous each day.

"One evening, half dead from hunger, cold and fatigue, I dropped down across your door and fell asleep. I should probably have died there like an abandoned kitten, if you had not taken me in. You gave me food and shelter, and gave up your own warm bed. I awoke early, and, and naughty child that I was, began to rummage through all your things.

I found a handkerchief on your desk, and it seemed to me so pretty, with its red embroideries, that I took it in my hands to examine it. In some way, I never knew how, I upset a small ink bottle and stained the handkerchief. Imagine my terror! I dressed myself hurriedly, hid the ink-stained object in my pocket, and, as soon as I heard you stirring in the ante-room, I asked you to let me go. Some months passed. My parents died, one of grief at having lost me, the other by assassination from a political section. My grandfather was searching everywhere to find me, and he succeeded. Now, do you understand me?"

"Yes; but—"

"But it remains for me to thank you for having saved my life, and to return your handkerchief, unless you will give it to me as a souvenir."

"Princess—"

"You may call me Olga."

But he did not avail himself of this permission. "I will give you the handkerchief," he said, as if he had not noticed her interruption. "I am happy to be able to gratify even a whim of one who has, 'all the gifts from all the heights.' When you marry you may send it back to me."

"Have you not heard," she said impatiently, "that I shall marry no one, since the only man I would accept will never ask me?"

"Why will he not?" asked George, looking troubled.

"He thinks me too rich, I suppose. You know I am to have a dowry of many millions."

"Then the offer ought to come from your grandfather, or from you," replied George.

They stood for a moment gazing at each other in silence; then the princess burst into a merry laugh. "What im-

propriety you are advising," she cried. "You would not take me, would you, if I said you were the man I meant?"

"Olga! do you mean it?"

"Maybe so."

George has now always a kind word and a coin for the little Italian beggars. And he has ceased to be a pessimist. — From the French in the Voice.

Nuts That Can Dance.

A remarkable curiosity is a nut which grows at Hermosillo, Sonora, Old Mexico. It is called the nuez del diablo. Major Davis, who is just now holding down Colonel Barber's chair as Adjutant General in the Department of the Dakotas, was sitting in his easy chair contemplating a half dozen of the meats of these nuts, which had just been sent north by an officer of the regular army who is now in Mexico. The nuts were dancing about in a very mysterious way, and a Pioneer Press man and several others who were watching the strange performance were completely mystified.

"I'll not tell you what is the matter with these nuts," said the major. I'm not going to give away my trick. When a man learns a good sleight-of-hand performance is he going to give it away for nothing? I guess not."

The nuts continued to dance, and Lieutenant Sturgis, who was as much in the dark as the reporter, began a critical examination of the crazy objects supposed to be inanimate.

"Oh, yes, I think I have the trick," said the Lieutenant. "There is something alive in these nuts. There is a strange throbbing in them."

The reporter picked up one of the nuts, and surely enough there was a very peculiar throbbing sensation in it. The major was so thoroughly amused by this time that he could no longer withhold the secret. It seems that a worm is born on the inside of the meat of this nut and it lives there for some weeks and dies without seeing the light of day. The worm eats out the inside of the meat, then becomes restive and moves about a great deal. It is in this period that the nuts become apparently animate. The moving of the worm causes the nut to turn about.—St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press.

The Popularity of Metal Bedsteads.

The demand for metal bedsteads has increased very rapidly during the last few years, and more especially the last few months, and the West is changing its reputation in this line of goods. Formerly the demand was almost exclusively for wooden bedsteads, and very few iron, and still fewer brass beds were sold west of the Mississippi. Now, however, there is a steady call for good iron and brass bedsteads, as well as for lower priced grades. St. Louis is making a large quantity of furniture of every kind, and for some time has been manufacturing iron bedsteads of very durable and popular pattern. Now, to meet the demand for artistic brass bedsteads, a plant is being put in and another important addition made to the already extensive manufacturing facilities of the city. One of the reasons of the great growth in the furniture business of the city is the increased friendly relations between St. Louis and Mexico. Some people think there is not much scope for trade with Spanish-American countries, but this sentiment is confined exclusively to those who have never been to Mexico or to any other of the republics in which the Spanish language is spoken exclusively or extensively. One month spent in any of these countries will convince the most sceptical that the United States ought to have nine-tenths of the trade of these prosperous communities, and that it can have it for little more than the logical asking.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Russia's Soil Is Worn Out.

There is a general consensus of opinion among the European authorities that the climate of the black soil region of Russia has deteriorated, and this deterioration taking the form of prolonged and frequent droughts, with scorching hot winds, and general severity of climatic conditions, is chiefly due to the extensive destruction of forests. As to this year's harvest it is reported that rye, and other winter grain, was decidedly below the average, while the spring crops which at first were favorably reported upon have been much damaged by locusts, drought and hot winds.—American Agriculturist.

The Danger From Derelicts.

There is a danger to which ocean steamships are liable and which is perhaps more deadly than the breaking of the main shaft. This is in colliding with one of the derelict vessels that at present strew the Atlantic. Some of these derelicts have been drifting about on the Atlantic for some time past directly in the path of the big liners, and are a source of constant danger to passing vessels. The hydrographic chart for this month shows that at least three derelict vessels are in the steamship lanes," drifting hither and thither at the mercy of the waves and wind, and liable at any moment to come in the path of one of the transatlantic liners.

These derelict vessels are the Norwegian bark Capella, abandoned October 22; the British bark Cubana, abandoned November 14; and the Norwegian bark Supreme, abandoned October 21. Since this chart has been issued there are two or three other sailing vessels and steamships which have become derelicts in mid-ocean, and all these abandoned ships are a constant menace to navigation.

The life of a derelict is extremely long, as can be seen from the bark Wyer G. Sargent which was sighted a short time ago in the middle of the Atlantic, apparently as fresh as ever, although she was abandoned nearly two years ago. The consequences of a big passenger steamer crashing into one of these floating obstructions would be appalling, and the sharpest lookout is always kept for them. There is no means of doing away with these floating coffins, so that they constitute a standing menace to navigation, and are a stumbling block in its path.—New York Journal.

Prussic Acid Not From Peach Stones.

The statement was made recently that prussic acid was made from peach stones, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. This is altogether a mistake, for, although under certain conditions a trace of the main principle of the deadly poison can be found in peach stones there is not sufficient to produce the acid without other essential ingredients. Indeed, without the process of fermentation, there is no evidence at all of prussic acid in the stones. Prussic acid is composed of such things as animal refuse and blood solids, with large quantities of oil of vitrol. Even the smell of the acid produces pain in the throat and in the region of the heart, and there are few poisons for which there is such little opportunity for an antidote. If there is time, and there seldom is, for the poison is almost instantaneous in its action, ammonia inhaled very freely may give relief and reduce the absolute certainty of death to a grave probability.

Menthol Used From Time Immemorial.

The medicinal use of menthol in China and Japan goes back into the dateless ages. Isolated references to its application in the East are met with here and there in the records of western travelers in those parts, but, says the Chemist and Druggist, we shall probably never know the name of its discoverer, or the early history of its introduction. We do not even know with absolute certainty when, and by whom, menthol crystals were first brought to the notice of European pharmacologists. It is said they were used pharmaceutically on the continent as long ago as the end of the last century, but if that statement is capable of proof, the drug must have fallen into oblivion shortly after its introduction, for it was certainly utterly unknown, even by repute, to most persons in the drug trade twenty-five years ago.



A cream of tartar baking powder. Highest of all in leavening strength.—Latest U. S. Government Food Report.

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