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## AN OPTIMIST.

"O aged man, pray, if you know,  
Now answer me the truth!—  
Which of the gifts that the gods bestow  
Is the greatest gift of youth?"

"O aged man, I have far to fare  
By the divers paths of earth.  
Say which of the gifts that with me I bear  
Is the gift of the greatest worth?"

"Is it the might of the good right arm,  
Whereby I shall make my way  
Where dangers threaten and evils harm  
Holding them still at bay?"

"Is it the strength wherewith I shall climb  
Where few before have trod—  
To the mountain tops, the peaks sublime  
That glow in the smile of the god?"

"Is it the never-failing will,  
Invincible in might,  
Which armed against oppression still,  
Shall vanquish for the right?"

"Or is it the heart, thou aged man!—  
The heart impassioned, strong—  
Which shall be blest, as naught else can,  
In perfect love ere long?"

The old man smiled: the listening breeze  
Grew whist on the sun-lit slope;  
The old man sighed: "Ah, none of these!  
Youth's greatest gift is its hope."  
—Florence Earle Coates, in Lippincott's.

## THE BETTER WAY.

By Alice C. McKeever.

LOUISE!" "Yes, auntie."  
"Where is Bob Hunter?"  
"He has gone home."  
"So early. Why did he go?"

"He had letters to write, he said."  
The old woman glanced at the girl anxiously. Her eyes were dim, but she fancied that Louise looked as if she had been crying.

"My dear," she said, softly, "Bob is only a man—and you wouldn't let any sense of duty stand between you?"

The girl flushed deeply, and turned her lovely face toward her questioner.

"No, auntie, don't worry; it isn't a question of duty."

"I thought, perhaps—Bob is so close, he would object to me, and I wouldn't, not for the world, keep you apart. The poorhouse has no terrors for me—not if it makes you happy."

"You have a queer notion of what would make me happy. No, you are all I have left, and we'll bide a wee together."

And the girl pressed her soft cheek against the one so old and wrinkled.

"It's hard," murmured the old aunt.

"First there was the old father and mother you nursed so long, and now there's me—and he's a likely lad as ever was. He'll be rich some day."

"Yes," said the girl, quietly. "I know it. He's made of the stuff that produces rich men. Let's forget him, for he is not of our world."

"But I hoped," persisted the old woman sadly, "that he might lift you, at least, up to his world. You work so hard, you are only a girl. Your life ought to have been so different."

"His world is not above mine," exclaimed Louise earnestly. "It is far below. I do not care to step down. Never mention this again, auntie, please."

But when the winter of snow and rain set in, and Louise had to plod back and forth a mile through the storm to the little millinery store, where she was hired at seventy-five cents a day, the old woman more than once brought up the name of her old-time lover.

"He's gone to the city," she said one day, "getting a salary that would make us rich, one year of it."

Louise, pale and weary, answered nothing, but the old woman continued plaintively.

"Now, if it hadn't been for me you'd be a fine living like a queen. Seems like instead of helping you, as I want to, I only take all your hopes away. Dear, dear, how long I do live."

"Hush!" said the girl, sternly. "How unkind you are! You are all I have in the world. You are all I have ever had since—since they went away!"

"You're twenty-five," said the old woman, softly. "You're the prettiest girl for miles around. I always thought—"

"I'd marry. Well, I won't," answered Louise, brightly, "for I'm determined to be an old maid."

Bob Hunter had been in the city twenty years. He was no longer known as Bob, but as Robert Hunter, millionaire.

He had friends, such as they were, astute business financiers like himself; servants who ran at his bidding, but not one person in the whole world who loved him.

Even the little errand boys knew him for what he was, hard, cold and uncharitable. They were paid their stipulated prices, never a cent more. This world and this life was only a place to live long in, in order to grow rich and richer.

He seldom recalled his old country home; there were no ties there to hold

him. Only, sometimes, there came a fleeting memory of a fair young face, the one face in the world he had truly loved.

"She was a little fool," he would mutter; "she's been a martyr long enough. I didn't propose to saddle myself with that old aunt. Well, she chose her way, I hope she's enjoyed it."

Accident brought back his old home vividly at last. There was a railroad running through that part of the country that he desired to buy.

"I'll run out there a few days," he said; "it will be prudent to do so, and I wonder how the old place looks by this time, anyway. Nobody will recognize me, I dare say."

But they did; the newspapers that heralded his name, and the old neighbors who remembered him as a boy wanted to see the great man he had become.

A number of old friends, as they were pleased to call themselves, undertook to show him around and to point out the improvements that twenty years had brought about.

There was a new court house, a new jail, and, lastly, a fine, large building, lately erected for the county poor.

Bob did not care a copper cent to be shown any of the affairs, but he had his own reasons for being civil, hence he permitted himself to be dragged hither and thither and at last actually found himself inside the handsome new poorhouse.

"The matron will show us through," said the obsequious friend. "Who knows but you may run across some of your old acquaintances," he added, with a light laugh.

In one of the large halls they passed a woman bending over a little child, who was sobbing bitterly. The woman sat in a low armchair, and her face was hidden, but the mass of brown hair rolled in a knot at the nape of her neck was heavily streaked with gray.

"Get out of the road, Jimmy," said the matron. "You are always getting hurt." Then turning to the woman she said, "Have you finished the shirts?"

The woman raised her head and replied softly that she had. The sunlight streaming in through the window brought her head and face and slight form into bold relief.

He saw her plainly, her voice had betrayed her even before he had known or guessed her identity. Yes, it was Louise, older, frailer, helpless and a beggar, not exactly that, for it seemed even here she was a toiler as of old.

"My God!" he thought, "how long has she been here?"

But they hurried him on, and when once more in the open air he felt he had not reached it any too soon. He was never so near a fainting fit in his life.

"Are you ill, Mr. Hunter?" inquired more than one.

"A little," he replied. "I think I will go to my room at the hotel and rest until supper."

But no sooner did he find himself alone than he sent for one of the maids, a girl that he knew had always lived in the place.

"Mary," said he, "I want to ask you a few questions, and you're not to tell any one a thing I shall say. If I make you a present of five dollars, do you think you can hold your tongue?"

Mary tossed her head and eyed the five-dollar bill.

"I can tell the truth without being paid. As for telling anything else, no money could make me do that."

"Very well, my girl, I only want the

truth. When was Louise Upton taken to—"

He did not finish, something seemed to choke back the word.

The girl's eyes opened and grew round as saucers. Ah, she remembered now hearing her granny tell that Louise Upton had once had a lover who had gone away and grown rich. Could it be this was he?

"Only a year ago," she answered softly, pitying the man she saw was really suffering. "She worked as long as she could, but it was rheumatism crippled her feet and she could not run a machine, then her hands were bad, too, and—and there wasn't any one to take care of her, so she asked to be put where she is."

"How long has her aunt been dead?"

"Her aunt! Oh, I can just remember her; about fifteen years, I think. But a nicer, sweeter lady than Miss Louise couldn't be found. Lots of us cried and would have helped her, but she said no, she would go where she belonged."

"Where she belonged?" repeated the rich man in a tone of voice that made the girl's eyes sparkle.

"Here is your money; take it, and I'll not forget you, either."

"Thank you," said the maid, smiling joyously. "You are very kind."

Very kind! Did the walls take up the words and echo and re-echo them? Kind, very kind! Him; kind!

He sat for an hour with closed eyes and compressed lips; then as the shades of evening stole around, he passed out and sought once more the matron of the county infirmary.

"It is not the hour for visitors," she said crossly.

But when he explained that he must see one of the inmates privately, and tendered another five-dollar bill, he was quickly admitted.

He waited for her in a cold, damp room called the reception room, and she came at last—at last. The door opened softly, there was a thump, thump of two crutches over the floor, and Louise, wondering and surprised, stood before him.

He bowed and wheeled forward a small sofa upon which she sank, more and more surprised, for she did not recognize him.

"Louise," he said, huskily, coming out into the stronger light. "Louise, don't you know me?"

"Bob—Bob Hunter!"

"Yes," he said, taking a seat at her side. "Bob Hunter. Don't you want to shake hands?"

She half extended her hand and then drew back.

"Don't, if you don't want to."

"Oh, it isn't that—but my hand—"

He knew, when he took it almost by force; the pretty, white hand that had been was now drawn and toll-marked. He held it between both his own, his head bent over it, while a hot tear fell upon it.

Louise felt her breath coming and going at a most surprising rate, while she could not speak.

"I've thought it all over, Louise, ever since I found you here, this afternoon. I never knew what a cold-hearted villain I was before, but I know it well enough now."

Still Louise was silent.

"I loved you. I have never loved any one else, but money was my God, and—and it conquered me. But to-day, when I saw you so frail and helpless and so poor, and thought of all your life had been, and contrasted it with what it might have been, had I not been so cruel in the past, I felt that I wanted to go out and shoot myself."

"But you didn't," said Louise, smiling with something of her old brightness.

"No, because back of it all was a little hope, a faint ray indeed, but I thought, perhaps, even if you hated me, you might let me see that—that you never wanted for anything. If you don't, I won't answer for the consequences."

"Fie, Bob?"

"Of course, there's a better way—that is, if you don't hate me after all, which do you choose?"

The cold and cheerless room seemed to change to one of radiant splendor, when he bent over to hear her low reply.

"I have always tried to choose the better way."—Household Companion.

## A Good Fire Extinguisher.

A very perfect fire-extinguishing compound is made by mixing twenty pounds of common salt with ten pounds of sal ammoniac in seven gallons of water.

An innkeeper of Wilhelmberg, who turns the scale at 502 pounds, is the heaviest man in Germany.

## Last Days of Clifford's Inn.

Clifford's Inn, London, which in the course of a few months will have gone the way of some other inns, and have been knocked down in the course of modern improvement by the hammer of the auctioneer, had retained as became an institution which is the premier of its kind, and dates from the days of Edward III. more than one quaint manner and custom. The society, for instance, was governed by a principal and rules, and the rules were just as much incarnate as was the principal—more so, indeed, some of them. Latterly, to obviate any invidious distinction, all the members were made rules. There was also a "Kentish mess" at which you might consider it rather a privilege to be asked to dine. Dinner ended, the napery of an extremely long and highly polished black mahogany table would be whisked off with a swift dexterity unexampled elsewhere. And then there would be brought to the President what looked like a hammer and was a little hard-baked loaf, and, anon, send it skimming to the other end, there to be as dexterously caught in a basket, in token that the fragments that remained of the banquet were panniered for the poor.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

## Earth's Most Gorgeous Palace.

Seventy-four years after St. Peter's at Rome was finished, Shah Jehan was building the most magnificent palace in the East—perhaps in the world—the beautiful Palace of the Moguls at Delhi. It is made of red sandstone and white marble; some of its walls and arches are still inlaid with malachite, lapis-lazuli, bloodstone, agate, carnelian and jasper. There were once silver ceilings, silk carpets and hangings embroidered with gems; the pillars were hung with brocades; the recesses were filled with china and vases of flowers, treasures of the goldsmith's craft, also, no doubt from France and Italy—the Italy of the Renaissance and the France of Mary of Medicis. Beyond doubt there was the famous Peacock Throne—a sort of large four-posted bed all made of gold, with two peacocks standing behind it, their tails expanded and set with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls and diamonds, while a parrot cut out of a single emerald perched upon the tester. On the front side of the canopy was a diamond—the Koh-i-noor, now among the crown jewels of England. Tavernier, the jeweler, who was at Delhi in 1665, beheld these wonders and thought they represented, all told, "200,000,000 of livres."—Collier's.

## Woman's Ready Wit.

South Wales proudly tells this story as proof woman's superior wit:

An inland revenue officer called to inquire if a lady had a license for her dog. She politely asked him to come in and sit down while she looked for it. In a few minutes she smilingly entered the room, bearing the license. Then it appeared she had in the meantime paid a visit to the postoffice at the corner.

From Yorkshire, says the London Express, comes a story that surpasses this one from South Wales.

A bailiff had to seize the furniture in a cottage. He knocked at the door. A relative of the woman who rented the house presented herself. She wore a woe-begone countenance, and whispered with her forefinger before her mouth: "Hush! She is going. Call again, if you kindly will, sir!"

The officer of the law was compassionate. He postponed his visit for a week. The relative again appeared upon the scene, and, with tears in her voice, said: "She's gone! She's gone! And she's taken all the furniture with her!"

## Stoneware Furniture.

The German plan of finishing meat shops with tiles is a very satisfactory one, as cleanliness is thereby secured with added attractiveness. In many German butcher shops the floor, walls, ceilings, counters, scales and desks are all finished with glazed tile, somewhat similar to those used in the American bathroom. Stoneware furniture is a novelty in German shops that might be adopted with advantage in this country. This is especially applicable to meat shops, fish and other markets, kitchens, sculleries, etc.—Philadelphia Record.

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A strong movement has arisen in London in favor of a dead Zoo as an adjunct to the living—the creation of a spacious museum in which animals who have succumbed should be staged in accordance with their surroundings, an expert taxidermist being retained in order to prepare for this permanent preservation.

## WHY WE LAUGH.

This Professor Finds Twelve Types of Laughable Things.

Professor James Sully, the English psychologist, has recently published an interesting volume on the nature, causes and effects of laughter.

He makes twelve general classes or types of laughable things: (1) Novelty, (2) physical deformities, (3) moral deformities and vices, (4) disorderliness, (5) small misfortunes, (6) indecencies, (7) pretenses, (8) want of knowledge, (9) the incongruous and absurd, (10) word plays, (11) that which is the expression of a merry mood, (12) the outwitting or getting the better of a person. It will be noticed that the majority of these things are essentially displeasing in character. Indeed, a careful examination of nearly every case of a laughable sight or occurrence will show that in the abstract it is painful rather than pleasant. Possibly the secret of this curious and apparently paradoxical fact lies in the harmless intention and result of the episode, which under ordinary or other circumstances might have been tragical. A Beau Brummel falling into a dirty, shallow pond is distinctly humorous to most people; if, however, the pond is deep and drowning is imminent, the laughter is replaced by efforts at succor. Mr. Tupper's nearly shooting off the gamekeeper's head was funny; if he had actually done so the operations of the Pickwick Club would have been very much curtailed.

An explanation offered by Mr. W. McDougall in reviewing Professor Sully's book seems rather more ingenious than convincing. He says: "We may surmise, then, that the laughter reaction has been developed as a necessary corrective of the effects of sympathy, for the power of sympathy is so great that in the absence of this corrective those spectacles which meet us on every hand, and which we call the ludicrous, might well destroy us." Whatever the true physiology of laughter may be there are certain facts regarding its physiology which are undisputed. The most important of these is its increase of the vital activities so as to cause exhilaration. It increases the circulation and leads to a more perfect oxygenization of the blood. It is one of the best medicines for indigestion, and a valuable safety valve for worn out, overstrained nerves.

The assumption that in general we laugh because we are pleased (to which Mr. McDougall takes exception) although the pleasure may be of a very complex nature and often perilously close to pain, will still seem the most tenable one to most people.

## CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Many Important Lines of Business Are in Their Hands.

Our countrymen own and operate four banking institutions; one daily and three weekly newspapers. They pay one-fifth of the slaughter house receipts of the city of Manila; one-third of the market; two-fifths of the license; one-ninth of the industrial tax; two-fifths of the cedula tax; two-sevenths of the stamp tax; one-sixth of the import tax direct in their own name, besides more than as much more through the English firms. Over one-half of the bulk of the goods received through the custom house is for Chinese firms, and they pay less than 2 per cent of the fines. The custom house officials state that their accounts are more nearly correct, that they are more prompt in receiving and paying for their goods, and cause less trouble to the customs officials than any other class of importers. They have six boats engaged in the coastwise trade with an average of over 500 tons burden. While they have only a few boats registered in their own names which ply in the coastwise trade, yet business of all to the towns of any importance is largely carried on by Chinese merchants. The rice trade, which is probably the largest single article of trade in the islands, is almost wholly carried on by them. Out of 489 importers, 199 are Chinese. We have no hesitancy in saying that when you consider that there are only about 80,000 Chinese in the islands and less than 40,000 in Manila, these are significant facts.

## Market for Italian Cauliflowers.

Thirty tons of cauliflowers from Italy are now being landed daily at Folkestone for the London market.