The Roanoke Beacon.

$1.00 a Year, In Advance. "FOR GOD, FOR COUNTRY, AND FOR TRUTH." Single Copy, 5 Cents.

VOL. XIV. PLYMOUTH, N. C., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1903. NO. 25

THE EGOTIST.

Thrice blessed is the egotist
Who fancies him creation's lord,
And holds that in the scheme of things
He, only he, is heaven's ward.

Sweet consolation's in the thought
For all the ills that him pursue;
His egotism, in effect,
Makes all his fond delusions true.

For him the skies are blue above,
For him the scented zephyrs blow,
For him the minstrel birds do sing,
And mighty rivers rise and flow.

The splendid heavens oft unroll
Their starry scroll for his delight,
And nature whispers to his soul
In all the voices of the night.

Though pains may rack his mortal frame,
Though under foot his hopes are trod,
He welcomes all, as kindly tests,
To prove him worthy of his God.

Oh, splendid and sublime self-love!
Ambition, hope and friendship fail,
But thy fair light still leads the soul,
Serene, unconquered, through the vale!

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

COMMITTED TO THE DEEP.

BY A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK.

THE steward knocked and put his head in at the door.

"Cabin passenger, sir, No. 16," he reported, with a businesslike brevity. "Very bad."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Dun'no, sir. Uncommon bad."

"Usual thing, I suppose?"

"No, sir. Not seasick. Queer when he came aboard yesterday, I thought. Been in bed all day. Wouldn't let me get him anything—till just now he asked me to fetch you."

"No. 16, you say? All right."

The steward withdrew, and the doctor only delayed to finish the first paragraph of a letter he had been writing when he was interrupted.

It was not precisely an urgent letter, for he had no intention of doing anything with it until the ship arrived at Liverpool; but it was a letter that required a deal of consideration, and, though he was in most things phlegmatic, he was impatient to have it all ready to post immediately he landed, for it was to contain much that he knew he could not possibly put into speech, and it was to tell the recipient that he would arrive less than half a day behind it.

Few of the passengers were in bed yet, for the night was young; the sea was quiet and the outer air pleasantly warm, and through the rhythmic throbbing of the engine he could hear chattering and laughter and footsteps pacing overhead as he made his way between decks to his patient.

The lamp that shone from the wall of No. 16 showed him a haggard man stretched on the bunk apparently asleep.

He was a youngish man—not much over thirty, anyway. His features were gaunt and tanned with hard living and rough weather, and his hands were coarsened as with manual employments. He slept uneasily and his breathing was stertorious and difficult.

While the doctor was taking this preliminary survey of him he coughed and awoke.

"Steward!"

"I'm the doctor. You sent for me. What's wrong?"

"Oh, thanks. . . . I didn't know, doctor. I've felt awfully knocked up for days past, and thought I could throw it off—but I can't. My head's all afire, and my hands, too. Feel that."

The doctor took his hand and laid a finger on his pulse. The hand was hot and dry, the pulse was galloping furiously, and a brief examination was sufficient to diagnose his ailment.

"A touch of pneumonia," said Yalden. "You must take more care of yourself than you've been doing lately. You were not fit to travel; you must have felt ill before your started."

"I wanted to get home," the other answered, wearily. "I've been away—a long time."

"We must see what we can arrange about nursing," the doctor concluded. "I'll give you some medicine; you've got a good constitution, and, with care, you'll pull round all right."

"Think so?"

"Oh, yes. . . . He mustn't be left, Barrow." The doctor turned to the steward. "Somebody will have to sit up with him to-night. I'll see him again before I turn in, and I'll get the captain to let you have some assistance."

After fulfilling which latter duty he retired to his cabin and resumed the laborious composition of his letter.

A glimpse of what he was writing would have amazed any man who knew him. For to everybody who knew him, with one possible exception, Dr. Yalden was a matter-of-fact, rather unsympathetic, wholly unromantic man, of nearer fifty than forty; whereas the letter that was slowly developing under his pen might almost have been written by a sentimental youngster in the rapturous agonies of first love. Nobody would have credited the doctor with possessing the smallest streak of sentiment anywhere in his robust, substantial person. He never suspected it himself even until three years ago.

Three years ago he met in London the girl he told himself he had been looking for all his life. She was nearly twenty years his junior, but what did that matter? Her people had been rich and proud, and now, through recent financial disasters, they were poor and prouder, but what did all that matter, either? He loved her, and cared for nothing else if she could only love him.

He had been impelled to tell her so; for his ingrained hardness and self-restrain had failed him at the first touch of this bewildering passion that, so long a-coming, subdued him utterly at last. She heard him with pity in her eyes, but not love; and she told him, with only pity in her tones, that the man she loved was dead and her heart was buried with him.

Later, he learned the story that lay behind her words, and saw more hope in it for himself than she had given him, for surely his living love of her could, in due time, win her away from the memory of a dead rival. Beginning to flatter himself that she was already relenting toward him, he had appealed to her again before he last left home, and she had seemed to waver—she silenced him tremulously, and had seemed to hesitate; and feeling that each new day put a barrier between her and her past and removed one from betwixt himself and her, he would not take her answer then, but begged her to think of all it must mean to him and let him ask her for it, once for all, when he came home from his next voyage.

He was speeding homeward now, and the letter was to prepare her for his coming.

He wrote it with so many pauses for reflection that by 10 o'clock it was still unfinished when, mindful of his patient, he relocked it in his desk.

No. 16 was awake, but drowsy with sheer weakness.

"The chest's still troublesome," he answered, with a feeble cheerfulness, but I'm a trifle better, thanks."

The doctor was not so sure of that.

"We've got to keep your strength up, somehow," he said; adding to the steward, "Get some beef tea for him, Barrow. I'll stay here while you're gone."

The dim, stuffy little cabin was silent for awhile, except for the labored respiration of the sick man, who presently, becoming aware of the doctor's ruminant scrutiny, roused himself to speak.

"If I don't pull through this, doctor——"

"Don't worry about that; you will."

"But if I don't—I'm not afraid of dying. I've been near it too often for that; and yet, now, it seems harder than it ever did before."

"You'd better not talk. I don't want you to excite yourself."

"Not me! What I mean is, it would be hard luck to die on the way home. I've been away nearly nine years. I went away as poor as a rat, and I'm coming back rich. That's something, isn't it?"

"It's a great deal."

"To me it is. I didn't go out because I'd got the gold fever. . . . It's out to the Klondyke I've been, doctor; away beyond Dawson City, up the Yukon—Lord! it's the kind of country you see in nightmares. I've been seeing it over and over in nightmares ever since I've been ill."

"Don't think of it——"

"I wish I couldn't!" He laughed, but there was a feverish brightness in his eyes, and his voice quavered with suppressed excitement. "I haven't had time to think of it till now."

He went on talking, and Yalden listened absently, with strange doubts troubling his mind; and, so listening, he half-unconsciously fashioned from the other's words visions of vast snow wastes stretching into the night or the day, now silent and lonely as death, now blurred, and whirling, and howling with the fury of a storm, and always deep in the desolation of it, a desperate little band of adventurers struggled forlornly, chasing a dream, starving and falling, and dying, some of them, in the track of it; and here, at last, with the unimaginable terrors of that bleak wilderness left behind him, one of the few survivors had emerged triumphant, with his dream realized.

Triumphant, so far.

The doctor eyed him gloomily from under a frown.

"And I'm not dead, though I'm supposed to be!" the other chuckled grimly. "One everlasting, terrible winter we were snowed up miles away from anywhere, and we were put down as done for. The wonder is that we were not. Only two of us managed to worry through, and we wandered heaven only knows where, and we lived—well, we didn't live. But we worried through—and I'm going home." His eyes closed, and he rambled on dreamily: "Nine years! but she'll be waiting. I told her that it wouldn't be more than two—and she said, 'It's till you come, Ned; and if you never come I shall wait, till I meet you, at the end.'"

He lay quiet a moment, and then opening his eyes and finding the doctor regarding him intently, he continued:

"We've never written to each other. We promised her people we wouldn't. She was to be free to change, if she would; they said it was best. I had no money and no prospects, but if I went back a rich man and she had not changed. . . . . I knew she never would. Whether I lived or died, she said she would never change—and she won't."

"Did you say your name was Edwin Ashton?"

The doctor was startled by the alien sound of his own voice.

The sick man nodded, and, pointing across the cabin:

"Her portrait's in my bag, doctor," he said. "Do you mind getting it for me? My will's in there, too. I made it as soon as I struck my first luck, in case. . . . . Oh, what I wanted to ask you, doctor, was—if I don't pull round, will you have my bag and everything sent to her? You'll find her address——"

"Yes, yes. But not now," Yalden interrupted harshly. "You've talked too much already. . . . . Come along, Barrow," he hailed the advent of the steward with ineffable relief. "Call me if he is worse in the night."

He was dazed and stupefied by the knowledge that had come upon him so unexpectedly, and yearned to get away and be alone where he might think of it.

Yet he could not think of it even when he was alone, for every thought as it touched his brain flamed into madness and became an incoherent flicker that dazzled and baffled him. One thought only burned to a clear and fiercely steady blaze—a sinister, diabolical thought that he dared not face, and could not extinguish.

"My God!" he muttered, pacing his cramped room like a caged animal. "It's more than I can bear!"

He lost all count of time, as a man does when he sleeps, but when the steward summoned him hurriedly an hour after midnight he had evidently not been in bed; a light was burning in his cabin, he was still dressed, and his face was wan and his eyes heavy as if in pain.

"Mr. Ashton's worse, sir. Edwards is with him, and he called me to fetch you. He can't sleep. Keeps sitting up, Edwards says, staring as if he could see people, an' talking very sing'lar. Delirious, I expect, sir."

"We must try a sleeping draught," said Yalden dully. "I'll be there directly."

Barrow being gone, he buried himself in the medicine cupboard, and hastened after him, carrying something in a glass.

Drawing near to No. 16 he could hear the sick man babbling monotonously, and the very sound of his voice stung him and quickened that fire to a fiercer flame within him; till suddenly he caught a word of what the man was saying—merely a name, but the utterance of it checked him instantly, as if a hand had plucked at his sleeve.

He stood trembling, and in that same instant saw, shaping white in the darkness before him, a sweet, sad face, grown pale with weary years of longing—the pure, wistful eyes looked into his, and their calmness calmed him, and their sadness made him ashamed.

He was sane again; he could not go on, but yielded to gentler impulses as readily as if the utterance of her name had conjured her there in very reality to turn back, and he regained his better self in her presence.

With a something breaking like a sob in his throat, he swiftly retraced his steps, pausing in the unlighted saloon to open one of the portholes and fling the glass he carried far out into the dark.

Thereafter, he sat till well into the day watching and tending the man she loved and had loved so long. He shrank from trusting himself alone with his own thoughts again yet; and, because she loved him and her happiness was bound up in his life, all that unhappy night he fought with death for the man he hated.

Going on deck in the morning he leaned over the side to tear up the letter he had written and scatter its fragments into the sea.

It was the burial of a great hope that had died in the night.

As he walked away, the captain, coming from breakfast, met him and lingered to make inquiries.

"'Morning, doctor; how's the patient? You're not going to make a funeral of it, I hope?"

"Not quite," Yalden laughed carelessly. "He has taken a turn for the better"—Black and White.

Forests Destroyed by Goats.

Sheep and goats when numerous are liable to cause widespread injury, particularly in forested regions. An instructive example of the damage done by goats is afforded by St. Helena, which is a mountainous island scarcely fifty square miles in extent, its highest summits reaching an elevation of 2700 feet. At the time of its discovery, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is said to have been covered by dense forest; to-day it is described as a rocky desert. This change has been largely brought about by goats, first introduced by the Portuguese in 1513, and which multiplied so fast that in seventy-five years they existed by thousands. Browsing on the young trees and shrubs they rapidly brought about the destruction of the vegetation which protected the steep slopes. With the disappearance of the undergrowth began the washing of the soil by tropical rains and the destruction of the forest.

Which Got Her?

What appears to be a triangular elopement in Indiana is disclosed in the disappearance of a father, son and a pretty girl to whom both had been paying attention. For some months Purdum Lucas, aged sixty, has been paying court to Miss Nettie Rivers, a domestic. His suit won favor, until a week ago, when Lucas' son, Henry Lucas, appeared, and he, too, paid court to the young woman. It developed the trio disappeared during the night. The puzzling question now is did the girl marry the father or the son, or either? All three boarded the same train and have not been heard from since.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Bee Plants.

There have been some attempts at the cultivation of plants especially adapted to honey productions, but they have been abandoned as unprofitable. A small patch of bloom does not amount to a great deal in the way of honey production—there must be acres and acres of bloom. The raising of crops that produce honey in addition to something else (buckwheat and alsike clover, for instance), and the scattering of sweet clover or catnip seed, and the like, in waste places, seems to be the most that can be done profitably in this direction.—Country Life in America.

Instinct of Wild Animals.

It has been stated that animals instinctively avoid any vegetation that might be harmful to them. This may be true to a certain extent of animals in a wild state, but even they in times of dearth will devour anything that comes within their reach, while domestic animals show very little discretion at any time. In some parts of this country thousands of cattle and poultry perish yearly from eating poisonous plants.

The Largest Parliament.

The Hungarian House of Representatives is the largest in the world. It has 751 members.

FACTS ABOUT FLOODS.

Influence of Vegetation and Forests Upon Rainfall.

As a sponge will absorb and hold a certain quantity of water and no more, so the air will hold a certain quantity of vapor and no more.

But the sponge can be relied on to hold the same amount of water at all time, while the air cannot. Whatever amount may be stored in the air at any particular moment, it is impossible to say with certainty how long that supply will stay there.

All over the whole earth water is vanishing and reappearing, and coming into sight out of the air; being evaporated and being condensed; passing from the liquid to the gaseous form, and from the gaseous to the liquid form.

So the air is always at work, taking in moisture from every possible quarter—until full. As soon as the atmosphere is thoroughly saturated it returns to take in another drop.

The annual average rainfall, including melted snow, over the United States, varies in different sections of the country from less than four inches to more than one hundred inches, the quantity depending largely on the elevation, distance from the ocean, and the direction either of the prevailing wind, or on accidental winds caused by the passage of storm centres across the country.

There is a well-marked tendency in Illinois, Iowa, the entire Missouri valley, Nebraska and Kansas to a very wet May and June, or June and July. As there are three of the four months in which cyclonic conditions of the atmosphere prevail, the resultant heavy rains and cloud-burst are easily accounted for. As the country named is almost as flat as Holland, and filled with broad, sluggish, shallow rivers, floods follow as a matter of course.

Apart from even exceedingly heavy rains or downpours may be classed the enormous masses of water which now and then fall, and which are popularly known in America as cloud-bursts or water spouts. In such cases the ancient of water that falls in an hour or two must equal rainfalls which are otherwise deemed excessive for a day or even for a month in that region. These, as the reports of the United States signal service show, have caused many of the most destructive floods.

The question of the influence of vegetation and forests upon rainfall is a perplexing one, and from its character is not susceptible of positive proof or disproof. The influence of forests on rainfall or temperature must depend on the extent, density and character of the woodland growth. The evaporating and absorptive powers of foliage necessarily vary with the species, and are also dependent for nearly half the year on the amount of leaves. There is no question, however, but that the presence of vegetation subserves the conservation of rainfall and aids in its regular and systematic distribution. The cloud-bursts and disastrous floods described in the reports of the signal corps, as already pointed out, have almost all occurred in those states where rainfalls are infrequent and there are no forest growths.

Automatic Swiss Restaurants.

Automatic bars have become so successful in Switzerland that a company has been formed to supply the Swiss and their visitors with electric automatic restaurants, where, as if by magic, meals ranging from the modest chop and chips to the elaborate six course table d'hote, will be served by electricity to all comers. The only thing necessary is to take your seat, glance over the bill of fare, place your money in the right slot, and the machinery does the rest. Prices will be strictly moderate, and a dainty dinner, with wine included, will only cost about two shillings.—London Express.

A quart of oysters contains about the same amount of nutrition as a quart of milk, three-quarters of a pound of lean beef, two pounds of fresh cod or a pound of bread.

Canine Intelligence.

Pete—"De lumberyard gang had dat yellow pup well trained."

Jimmy—"Dat so?"

Pete—"You bet. Why, every time dey'd tie a can to his tail he'd go down to Kelly's an' bring it back full of beer."

The most progressive paper-hangers are always pressed to the wall.