

## THE SUNSET GUN.

Against the sky the flag is hung  
By winds that catch the bugle song  
And bear it onward, giving tongue  
To echoes faintly sweet and long.  
The white clouds in the western sky  
Dip now with red rays of the sun,  
And through the forest floats a sigh  
That whispers that the day is done.  
The sun dips lower, lower—then  
The clouds blaze out in richer red  
That seems reflected back again  
From the brave banner overhead.  
The shifting colors, pink and gold,  
And red, like fabrics in the loom,  
Change subtly, stripe and stream and fold—  
And now there comes a mellow boom.

It is the sunset gun. Now slow  
The flag glides downward to be furled,  
And mist and cloud and fair sky show  
Their sunset glory in this world.  
A roll of drums, a murmured tune—  
The flagstaff, tapering and tall—  
Then to the vanished afternoon  
There lifts a melting bugle call.  
The shadows of night's army come  
In serried ranks down the hill  
With neither trumpet, fife nor drum—  
And all is strangely hushed and still.  
Up from the east the first stars rise,  
Out from the west in red and white  
The sun sends bars that stripe the skies—  
The old flag bends above the night.  
—W. B. Nesbit, in Chicago Tribune.

## The Second Time.

A ROMANTIC  
SHORT STORY.

The north wind was howling round the solid walls of Cranford Lacy, but within the cozy rooms of the old Tudor mansion all was warmth and brightness. The firelight from the blazing logs danced over the oak panels of the lofty dining room; the daintily shaded lamps shed a rosy glow over the long table, which, with its snowy damask, glittering plate, and decorations of ferns and monster chrysanthemums, seemed to smile a welcome to the merry party who were gathering round it.

"Only a few old friends tonight, Dick," observed Mrs. Cranford to her cousin, Sir Richard Ruston. "It is so provoking that your godson Jack is not here yet; but I do hope he will be with us before the Southport Hunt week. He is always the life of our party!" she added.

It appeared to Sir Richard that the members of the family and guests already assembled were little in need of more enlivening influence, for, led and encouraged by the master of the house, they were positively overflowing with high spirits.

He confided this impression to his hostess, who smiled indulgently, saying, "Yes, they are a merry set; and some of them come here every year. I think you know them all well, except old Mrs. Doyle and Capt. Barker."

"Who is that fair girl in the white frock?"

"Oh, that is only Joyce Lidell. Surely you remember the vicar's twin girls?"

"No, Carry; I can't say I do. Probably Miss Lidell was in the nursery when I was here last. Remember it is four years since I was in England."

"Yes, four long years since we have seen you. And how delighted we were to hear you were coming at last!" said Mrs. Cranford, looking very kindly at the big dark-faced man beside her.

"And uncommonly nice it is to be with you all again," answered Sir Richard, while his eyes wandered rather absently from her good-natured plump countenance to the pretty girl who was sitting near the opposite end of the table.

Certainly, Joyce Lidell's beauty was of rather an uncommon type. Her features were so delicately chiseled and the black arched brows above her forget-me-not blue eyes were such a striking contrast to her pale golden hair. She was very tall and graceful in every movement.

Mrs. Cranford, who was not unobtrusively smiling, said, in a lower and more confidential voice, "I was telling you about Joyce. She is only nineteen. And I am going to take her to the Hunt ball, as she has never been to anything! But after that she will go back to college, for she hopes eventually to earn her own living as a high school teacher."

"She is much too pretty for a blue-stocking!"

"Well, perhaps her face will be her fortune. The vicar is dreadfully poor, and there are so many children. I can't imagine how the girls manage to dress as well as they do," remarked the wealthy chatelaine of Cranford Lacy.

Sir Richard Ruston, at the age of forty-one, was a pleasant-mannered rather staid bachelor. Owing to the death of an elder brother, he had lately succeeded to a baronetcy and a large fortune, after spending a considerable portion of his life working hard as a civil engineer in Ceylon.

Twenty years before the date when this story opens our hero had been most cruelly jilted by a woman a few years older than himself. Thenceforth he had hardened his heart against the fair sex generally, and had firmly determined that the joys and troubles of a benedict should never be his portion. But twenty years is a big slice out of the allotted three score and ten; and perhaps (though he was hardly aware of it) the old wound had healed long before that winter's evening when his eyes strayed so often in the direction of young Joyce Lidell.

Friendship may ripen very quickly in the country if circumstances throw two people together who are mutually satisfied with the arrangement. This fact Sir Richard Ruston and Joyce discovered when the former had been but a few days a guest at Cranford Lacy. A hard frost, holding the earth in an iron grip, stopped the hunting,

while it provided another pastime in the shape of skating over a very frozen lake. Thither from early morn till twilight flocked all the young and active neighbors; and Joyce from the vicarage and the Cranford Lacy party were ever among the merry crowd. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Cranford cared greatly for the delights of the ice, and rather inclined to regard their dignified cousin, Sir Richard, in the light of "Mrs. Grundy," gladly sent off the young people under his care and chaperonage. He took great care of the vicar's daughter, who was but a novice in the art of skating. He assisted her shuffling, sliding efforts, and pushed her in a chair when she was tired, receiving in return the most grateful of glances and smiles. She never talked much, but she proved a very sympathetic listener, and the usually reticent bachelor found himself developing brilliant and hitherto undreamed-of powers in the conversational line.

But one cold gray morning the skating party was suddenly broken up by an unexpected change in the weather. The wind lifted its voice with an angry moan, and great flakes of snow came falling helter-skelter, thick and fast, upon the surface of the ice.

"We are likely to have a bad storm, so we had better all go home at once," Sir Richard said to Joyce, and, with an air of calm authority, he led her to the bank, removed her skates and suggested that she should wrap her cloak around her and wait until he collected the remainder of his flock in order that he might escort her to the vicarage on the way to Cranford Lacy. She was obedient enough; but his cousins and their kindred spirits were very much more difficult to control; and it was only when they encountered the full fury of the gale on the homeward road which led across an exposed moor, that they were convinced that Sir Richard was right.

Joyce, struggling with a cloak which showed a decided inclination to whirl round her head, was not sorry to hear a kind voice behind her saying, "Take my arm, Miss Lidell—this weather is too rough for slender folk like you"; or to be guided through the snow until she had nearly reached her father's gate.

"How should I have got home without you! You are always so kind!" said the girl, gently, looking up at her companion with the most tender and grateful of blue eyes.

"Kind to you! I think it is quite the other way. You have been very good to me. Why, you did not even call me an old fuss when I told you you had better come home! Now, Miss Clarke called me something very like it," said Sir Richard, laughing.

"Of course, I should not be so rude or so stupid! You are not old, and you are not a fuss!" was the rather vehement reply.

"Compared to you I am decidedly elderly!" said the other, looking well pleased, nevertheless. "Well, of course you can call yourself what you like, but you are much nicer to talk to than that stupid Capt. Barker, or any of those boys who are staying at Cranford Lacy!" answered Joyce, with the engaging candor of extreme youth.

Sir Richard stopped abruptly on the road and caught the girl's hand in his. "Do you really mean that, Joyce?" he asked, very gravely.

"Of course I do! Why not?" she replied. Then, catching an expression in his dark eyes which filled her soul with sudden shyness, she drew her hand away, saying, "I must go now. Father will see me from his study window and wonder why I don't come in!"

"Wait one moment. When shall I see you again?"

"If the storm is not too bad I am coming to tea at Cranford Lacy this afternoon, and Janie is coming, too. She is at home now! You have not seen her?"

But Sir Richard was not interested in Janie, or in any other member of the vicar's family but the one he was now trying to detain by the gate.

too? It is my 'coming out' ball, you know!"

"Certainly I am going to it. And you must give me the first waltz!" exclaimed Sir Richard with all the ardor of five-and-twenty, as Joyce, with a merry laugh, disappeared through the paternal doorway.

When the skating party reached Cranford Lacy they found that Jack, the eldest son and the pride of the family, had at last come home. A general favorite, lively and amusing in his light-hearted, irresponsible fashion, his timely appearance more than compensated for the disappointment caused by the storm; and under his leadership the majority of the guests found no lack of amusement for the afternoon in the billiard room. But Sir Richard, shivering at the inclemency of the weather, sought the solitude of the library, where, before a cheerful wood fire, he indulged in quiet meditation while smoking a big cigar. And the subject of his thoughts was none other than Joyce Lidell, for, in spite of his forty-one years and calm judgment, he had actually fallen desperately in love with a little girl of nineteen.

"I wonder if it would be possible for her to care for me," he muttered aloud. And the cigar being finished, he tossed the stump into the fire, and, leaving his chair stood before a large mirror gazing long and critically at his own reflection. "No, a young girl could never care for such an ugly looking fellow," he thought, sadly; then again he told himself that Joyce was different from other girls, and that she really liked him for his own sake. But he tried to put away that last flattering thought, and contrasted himself with Jack Cranford who had all the best of his life still before him. "What a lucky lad! Careless, untidy chap, too!" mused his cousin as he glanced at the big writing table where his godson had left a writing case open and papers scattered in all directions after dashing off a hasty note for the post.

One letter was lying spread open on the floor. Sir Richard, orderly soul that he was, decided to pick it up. Jack's correspondent wrote a large clear hand; every letter was distinct. It was impossible not to see a few words as he placed it on the blotting pad. Ah! how those lines stabbed him, and what a weight fell suddenly upon his heart: "Get your godfather to pay this bridge debt. I feel sure he is good-natured. But you must flatter him well, and take him the right way." More followed, but Sir Richard had seen quite enough, for his eye had not failed to observe the bold signature, scrawled across the paper, "J. Lidell."

Sir Richard seldom indulged in the luxury of afternoon tea, so his absence from that cheery meal was hardly noticed. But a couple of hours later Mrs. Cranford, reading quietly in her own boudoir, was interrupted by the entrance of her husband and cousin, the former evidently annoyed and excited.

"Here, Carry! Dick has to go to town on business. He heard by the evening post. He has only ten minutes to get to the station, and he ought to have twenty!" And the astonished lady found her hand warmly shaken in farewell long before her somewhat slowly working brain had time to grasp the situation.

A thick fog in town. Sir Richard Ruston was horribly bored. Already he was tired of his club, and tired of the friends he met there. He felt out of touch with English life; he was weary of the coming election; he had no desire to talk politics, which seemed to be the one subject his acquaintance cared for at present.

What a fool he had been to run away because he had been mistaken in the character of a little unformed schoolgirl! Why had he ever taken any notice of her? Why had he been caught a second time by a pretty face, which no doubt was the mask of a false soul? And that very evening he was to have met her at the Southport Ball! He had actually asked her for the first waltz. Well, he supposed she would now give that dance to Jack.

And yet he could not stifle his desire to see Joyce at that ball. He longed to let her know in some way that he was well aware that she had tried to fool him. That at least would give him some satisfaction; and perhaps eventually he would play the part of the benevolent relative, and pay Jack's gambling debt. Yes, he would run down to Southport for the ball that night, and claim his dance with Joyce. Apres—? Well, at least he would have the consolation of a few days hunting from Cranford Lacy.

The Hunt ball promised to be a huge success, as vehicles of all descriptions, from the ancient station fly to the smartest electric brougham, deposited party after party of young men and maidens, chaperons, local magnates and officers from the barracks at the brilliantly illuminated Town Hall.

While the first bars of the "Rosen aus dem Suden" waltz were floating off the fiddles, Sir Richard Ruston, tall, dignified and outwardly nonchalant, strolled slowly into the ball-

room. Already Jack Cranford was dancing, and Joyce was his partner—Joyce, looking very lovely, but more animated, more sparkling and coquettish than she had ever appeared before. But who was this standing beside Mrs. Cranford, who lifted a blushing face as he drew near, and such gladly welcoming eyes?

"I kept your dance for you. I knew you would come!" she whispered.

"Joyce! Is it you, or have you a double? I saw you dancing with Jack!" he exclaimed, in utter yet happy bewilderment, unheeding the exclamations of satisfied astonishment which his appearance had called forth.

"That is my twin sister, Janie, and of course, you have not heard the news. She and Jack are engaged!"—Modern Society.

## WHEN SCIENTISTS ERRED.

### Dr. Lardner Maintained Steamers Could Not Carry Enough Coal.

It occasionally happens that the predictions and theories of mathematicians and scientists are woefully upset and contradicted by actual results. Every one is familiar with the story of the editor who, in the days of Stephenson's early experiments in railroading, predicted that a speed of more than 12 miles an hour by rail would be impracticable if for no other reason than that the human system would not withstand traveling at a higher rate of speed.

In the early days of steam navigation also, Dr. Lardner delivered an address before a scientific body, in which he maintained that transatlantic steam navigation was impracticable, mainly because of the inability to provide room aboard ship for the coal that would be necessary for the voyage. The meeting had scarcely adjourned before the news arrived that a ship has just completed a transatlantic trip under steam.

In another case a number of individuals seriously promulgated their belief that it would never be possible to successfully lay a cable across the Atlantic, because, as they said, the density of the water below a certain depth would be so great that the cable would not sink to the bed of the ocean. Regardless, however, of these predictions, the cable promptly sank to the bottom of the sea. At that time also, it may be noted, the greatest ocean depths in which cables were laid was only about 16,404 feet. Within the past year a cable has been successfully laid by a German company in the Pacific ocean in the vicinity of the Larkin islands at depth of 26,246 feet.

In still another instance the author of a well known text book on telegraphy, published in the sixties of the last century, expressed the opinion that while the idea of duplex telegraphy, or the sending of two messages at once over one wire, was very beautiful in its way, it must be looked upon as little more than a feat of intellectual gymnastics, and quite useless from a practical point of view. Within less than a decade after the publication of this opinion not only was the duplex telegraph in practical operation, but quadrupled telegraphy or the sending of four messages at once over one wire, was also an accomplished fact.

Notwithstanding that instances of this kind could be multiplied, there are still to be found people ready to write themselves down to posterity as erring prophets and so it will doubtless be to the end of the chapter. Fortunately, however, for the sake of progress, there are, on the other hand, always optimists enough to offset the discouraging views of the pessimists.—Cassier's Magazine.

## An Orchid Romance.

Orchid lovers have for many years been watching for the rediscovery of Fabrie's lady's slipper orchid. They wanted it, not merely because it had been utterly lost to cultivation, but because it was the parent of many of the most beautiful hybrids we have.

That Fabrie's orchid has eventually been rediscovered and reintroduced is the direct result of the British government's mission to Tibet. They were rushed to the auction rooms, and so keen was the excitement in the orchid world that plants of two or three growths sold at prices ranging from \$300 to \$500. The secret of another shipment being on the seas had been well kept, but it arrived in due time and today the lady's slipper, lost for half a century, can be purchased in good specimens for \$25. Already American collectors are in possession of the rarity, and it has even flowered in the collection of Mr. Brown, at St. Louis, Mo.—The Garden Magazine.

## Nothing to Fear.

"Were you frightened when you arose to make your first speech?"

"What should frighten me?"

"The audience."

"The audience left as soon as my name was announced."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

For thirty-five years the Government of Great Britain has owned and operated the telegraphs.

## AN EARTHQUAKE CITY.

### SAN FRANCISCO USED TO SHOCKS BUT EXPECTED THIS DISASTER.

#### Only Recently Have They Had Courage to Put Up Skyscrapers—Part of City Which Suffered Is On The Flats and Made Lands—A Stupid Water System.

Although San Francisco has always been known as an "earthquake town," frequency of shocks rather than violence has been characteristic of its seismic history.

There was a violent shock in 1856, when the city was only a mining town of small frame buildings. Several shanties were overthrown and a few persons killed by falling walls and chimneys. Next in violence was the shock of 1872, which cracked the walls of some of the public buildings and caused a panic. There was no great loss of life. In April, 1898, just before midnight there was a lively shakeup which caused the tall buildings to shake like the snapping of a whip and drove the tourists out of the hotels into the streets in their night clothes. Three or four old houses fell, and the Benicia navy yard, which is on made ground across the bay, was damaged to the extent of about \$100,000.

These were the heaviest shocks. On the other hand, light shocks have been frequent. Probably the sensible quakes have averaged three or four a year. These are usually tremblings lasting from ten seconds to a minute and just heavy enough to wake light sleepers or to shake dishes about on the shelves. Tourists and newcomers are generally alarmed by these phenomena, but old Californians have learned to take them philosophically. To one who is not afraid of them, the sensation on one of these little tremblers is rather pleasant than otherwise.

Yet the fear of a great earthquake disaster has always been over San Francisco. It has accounted in great degree for the peculiar architecture of the place. It was only in 1890 that any one ventured to build a high structure, and the inhabitants have been shy of brick and stone. The houses and the business blocks, to some extent are of wood—mainly California redwood. Brick residences are not common.

With the steady trade winds which prevail there at all seasons of the year the city should have been wiped out by a great conflagration long ago, and would have been but for the peculiar quality of California redwood, which smoulders in a fire and refuses to break into a bright and energetic blaze. Given a good water supply the fires are such that they are easily handled by the fire department. In fact, there has never been before this what might be called a general conflagration in San Francisco.

To understand this disaster it is necessary to consider the peculiar physical characteristics of the land upon which San Francisco is built. The original site was a bunch of high and abrupt hills ending in a peninsula, whose furthest reach forms one side of the Golden Gate, the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The greater part of the city proper is on the inner side of the peninsula, facing on the bay and not on the Pacific ocean. The city has been growing out toward the ocean, however; and Golden Gate Park, which starts as a broad ribbon of land at about the centre of the town, has reached an ocean frontage. The city now has a population of more than 400,000.

The four or five high hills were appropriated early in the life of the city as a residence district; and with the exception of Telegraph Hill, at one corner of the city, they hold the homes of the wealth and well-to-do. The business district was set on the low lands in the clefts between the hills, and, of course, as close to the wharf room on the bay as possible.

Such land being valuable, this district has been gradually filled in and extended for fifty years. "When the water came up to Montgomery street" is a San Francisco phrase describing the early days. Now there are ten blocks of business streets between Montgomery street and the water front. Here lies the warehouse and wholesale district.

The heart of San Francisco is "News-paper Corners," only a block inland from Montgomery street, and therefore verging on the old waterfront and the made lands. Here, on four corners, stood the Chronicle building, eleven stories, and the first high building in San Francisco; the Call building, twenty stories high, and the tallest structure in the city; the Examiner building, eight stories, and the new Mutual Bank building, twelve stories.

Just on the edge of the made land stood the Palace Hotel, not a high building, but covering a block of ground and one of the largest structures in the city. Across from it was the Crocker building, ten stories, and the smaller Hobart building, in which the Postal Telegraph Company was housed. At the centre of the square formed by the newspaper buildings stood the fountain presented by the actress Lotta to the city.

As has been said, the fear might happen in an earthquake combined with the scarcity of quarries and brickyards, San Francisco people from built a show of permanence. The break the tradition was Young, who put up the old Chronicle building in 1890. In the early days of skyscraper construction, and the framework Chronicle building was not but of wrought iron, while was of brick.

The building stood, weather small earthquakes and had happened to it. San Francisco heart and began to experiment tall buildings. In 1894 Spreckles put up the Call noted as one of the few real full skyscrapers in the count stood out of the city like a viewed from the hills and most conspicuous feature on scape of San Francisco. The building, the Emporium built Wells Fargo building, the new win building and half a dozen followed.

The business district lies Market street or north of it, street, even after it gets past of made land, is in depress most all of the district south ket street is on low lands, o tide flats. Here are the dwc the poor, corresponding to ment district of New York, ex the poor of San Francisco ar not in tall tenement building frame houses often of flimsy tion.

Experience with earthqua shown that low lands, and e made lands, suffer the mos seems to have been the case earthquake. It ripped thing the wholesale district of ma devastated all Market stre tumbled about the tenement.

Just across the Bay from S cisco, and on the eastern s the suburbs of Oakland, Alam Berkeley. Oakland, a city thing more than 70,000 inh is to San Francisco what is to New York, except the further away—about six n ferry. Here are all the terr the direct overland lines, and engers, except those coming southern routes, take ferry at for San Francisco. Further a bay shore, and adjacent to Oe Alameda, a residence town low land. Hitherto Alameda ferred from the slight earthq that region more than San F. On the other side of Oaklan ward of it on the overland r the college town of Berkeley, of the University of Califor

Although the water supply Francisco was ample, and wa out for fire purposes by a sy salt water mains, the syste made to be the prey of ear The greater part of the supp from the Spring Valley lake distance south of the city on a insula. The chief main ran a backbone of the peninsula i distance, but upon approach city it took an abrupt turn o and ran along the made lan it reached the business distri that point it was pumped t voirs on the crests of the ei where it got the fall to sup residence district. That dist of the made lands, which, of broke the water mains, cut off nearly the whole supply of t That possibility had not bee seen in planning the San F water mains.

The San Francisco new never mentioned the possibl disastrous earthquake, but the was always in the public m common subject of discussion Francisco was the effect of upon the new tall buildings. all of the architects declared t stood a vastly better chance t structures of brick and stone nary frame buildings. The in ing steel structures, they d would sway and give; the wo could be expected would be t bardment of the streets cau their shaking off their shells

## Dancing Men.

Men who can dance, accor the London Observer, are apt viewed with suspicion by the sex; and at public schools—the of so many of our insular foib prejudices—a dancing boy is al much "rotted" as a boy French with a Parisian ac have met many a man who c 17 feet, dance a "scuffle" or walk, run a three mile race, pi 20-pound dumb-bells, vault, w and swim, but who cannot o waltz, and doesn't want to.

The Englishman regards dan effeminate and "footing"—and accordingly; and the girls h at dances have to dance in hi

## A Dire Prophecy.

The eagle—I have oad great tage over you. I don't need dodging automobiles all the t "The cow—No; but just v they got these airships going fish American.