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NIL DESPERANDUM.

BY FRANK SUMNERFIELD.

Bear up! soiling one,
Never despair!
Fight it out manfully,
Skies will be fair,
Life has its sorrow,
To-day has its pain;
Hope on for the morrow
May triumph again.

Hearts may grow weary, yet
Hearts may be free,
And life grow more beautiful,
Happier to thee.
Stars will burn brightly then,
Thy pathway to cheer,
And labor grow pleasant, when
Hearts have no fear.

Sorrows are blessings, oft
Sent in disguise,
Only to try thee, man,
By the All Wise.
Then till thee on merrily,
Never despair;
Look ahead cheerily,
Skies will be fair.

Wonders of the Atmosphere.

The atmosphere forms a spherical shell surrounding the earth to a depth which is unknown to us by reason of its growing tenuity as it is released from the pressure of its own superincumbent mass. Its upper surface cannot be nearer to us than fifty and can scarcely be more than five hundred miles. It surrounds us on all sides, yet we see it not; it presses on us with a load of fifteen pounds on every square inch of surface of our bodies, or from seventy to one hundred tons on us all, yet we do not so much as feel its weight. Softer than the finest down, more impalpable than the finest gauze, it leaves the cobweb undisturbed, and scarcely stirs the slightest flower that feeds on the dew it supplies; yet it bears the fleets of nations on its wings around the world and crushes the most refractory substances with its weight.—When in motion, its force is sufficient to level the most stately forests and stable buildings with the earth; to raise the waters of the ocean into ridges like mountains and dash the strongest ships to pieces like toys. It warms and cools by turns the earth and the living creatures that inhabit it. It draws up vapors from the sea and land, retains them dissolved in itself or suspended in cisterns of clouds, and throws them down again as rain or dew when they are required. It bends the rays of the sun from their path to give us the twilight of evening and of dawn; it disperses and refracts their various tints to beautify the approach and the retreat of the orb of day. But for the atmosphere, sunshine would burst upon us and fall to us at once, and at once remove us from midnight darkness to the blaze of noon. We should have no twilight to soften and beautify the landscape, no clouds to shade us from the scorching heat; but the bald earth, as it revolved on its axis, would turn its tanned and weathered front to the full and unmitigated rays of the lord of day. It affords the gas which vivifies and warms our frames, and receives into itself that which has been polluted by use and is thrown off as noxious. It feeds the flame of fire; it is in both cases consumed and affords the food of consumption; in both cases it becomes combined with charcoal, which requires it for combustion and is removed by it when this is over.

"It is only the girdling encircling air," says a writer in the North British Review, "that flows above and around us, that makes this globe habitable. The carbonic which which to-day our breathing fills the air, to-morrow seeks its way around the world. The dainties that grow round the falls of the Nile will drink it in by their leaves; the cedars of Lebanon will take it off to add to their stature; the cocoa nuts of Tahiti will grow rapidly upon it and the palms and bananas of Japan will change it into flowers. The oxygen we are breathing was distilled for us some short time ago by the magnolias of Susquehanna and the great tree that skirt the Orinoco and the Amazon; the giant rhododendrons of the Himalay; the forest cinnamom tree of Ceylon, and the forest older than the flood, buried deep in the heart of Africa, far behind the Mountains of the Moon. The rain we see descending was washed off for use out of the icebergs which have washed the Polar star for ages; and the lotus hills have soaked up from the Nile and exhaled a vapor snows that rested on the summits of the Alps."

"The atmosphere," says Mann, "which forms the outer surface of the habitable world is vast reservoir, into which the supply of food designed for living creatures is thrown; or, in one word, it is itself the food in its simple form of all living creatures. The animal grinds down the fibre and the tissue of the plant, or the nutritious store that has been laid up within its cells, and converts these into the substance which its own organs are composed. The plant requires the organ and nutritious store thus yielded up as food to the animal from the invulnerable air surrounding it; but animals are furnished with the means of locomotion and are able to approach their food and hold it and swallow it; plants must await till their food comes to them. No solid particles find access to their frames; the restless ambient air, which rushes past them loaded with the carbon, the hydrogen, the oxygen, the water, every thing they need in the shape of supplies, is constant at hand to minister to their wants, not only affording them food in due season, but in the shape of fashion in which it alone can avail them."

Hogs in Kentucky.—A letter from Fleming county, Ky., dated 12th instant, estimates that 30,000 hogs have perished in that State during the late cold weather, and, in relation to the future, remarks:

Contracts are making for April and May delivery at 4 1/2 and 5 cents for stock hogs; and fat, November delivery, \$4.25 to \$4.60 per 100 pounds gross. Stock cattle to 2 1/2 to \$3; fat cattle very scarce and command 3 to \$4; fat hogs present, and for April and May delivery 4 to 4 1/2 live weight.

Miscellaneous.

A LEGEND OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

Many are the places, scattered over the face of our beautiful country, whose wild picturesque scenery is worthy of the painter's pencil, or the poet's pen. Some of them which were once celebrated for their rich stories of "legendary lore," are now only sought to view their natural scenery, while the traditions which formerly gave them celebrity, are buried in oblivion.—Such is the scene of the following adventurer—a romantic glen bounded on the North side, by a high and rocky hill, which stretches itself some distance into the lake, terminating in a precipice, some thirty feet in height, and once known by the name of "Peabody's Leap."

At the time of this adventure, Timothy Peabody was the only white man that lived within fifty miles of the place, and his was the daring spirit which achieved it. In an attack on one of the frontier settlements, his family had all been massacred by the merciless savages, and he had sworn that their death should be avenged. The better to accomplish this dread purpose, he had removed to this solitary place, and constructed the rude shelter in which he dwelt till the blasts of winter drove him to the homes of his fellow men, again to renew the contest when the Spring had awakened nature into life and beauty. He was a man who possessed much shrewd cunning combined with a thorough knowledge of Indian habits, by which he had always been enabled to avoid the snares of his subtle enemies. Often, when they had come with a party to take him, he escaped their lures and after destroying his hut, on their return homeward, some of their noblest warriors were picked off by unerring aim—or, on arriving at their town, they learned that one of their swift hunters had been ambushed by him and fallen a victim to his deadly rifle. He had lived in this way for several years, and had so often baffled them, that they had at last become weary of the pursuit, and for some time had left him unmolested.

About this time a party of Indians made a descent on one of the settlements, and had taken three men prisoners, whom they were carrying home to sacrifice, for the same number of their men that had been shot by Peabody.—It was towards the close of the day they passed his abode, most of the party in advance of their prisoners, who, with their hands tied, and escorted by five or six Indians, were almost wearied out by their long march and but just able to crawl along. He had observed this advance guard, and suspecting there were prisoners in the rear, had let them pass unmolested, intending to try some "Yankee trick," to effect their rescue. He accordingly followed on the trail of the party, keeping among the thick trees which on either side skirted the path. He had proceeded but a short distance before he heard the sharp report of a rifle, apparently very near him, and which he knew must be one of the Indians who had straggled from the main body to procure some game for their evening meal.—From his acquaintance with their habits and language, he only needed to disguise, to enable him to join with the party if necessary, and aided by the darkness which was fast approaching with but little danger of detection. The resolution was quickly formed, and as quickly put in operation, to kill this Indian and to procure his dress.

He had got but a few paces before he discovered his intended victim, who had just finished loading his rifle. To stand forth and boldly confront him would give the savage an equal chance, and if Tim proved the best shot, the party, on hearing the report of two rifles at once would be alarmed, and commence a pursuit.—The chance was therefore two to one against him and he was obliged to contrive a way to make the Indian fire first. Planting himself behind a large tree, he took off his fox skin cap, and placing it on the end of his rifle, began to move it to and fro. The Indian quickly discovered it, and was not at loss to recollect the owner by the cap. Knowing how often he had eluded them, he resolved to dispatch him at once, and without giving notice of his dangerous proximity he instantly raised his rifle and its contents were whizzing through the air. The ball just touched the bark of the tree and pierced the cap, which rose suddenly, like the death spring of the beaver, and fell amidst the bushes. The Indian, like a true sportsman thinking himself sure of his victim, did not go to pick up his game till he reloaded his piece, and dropping it on the ground, he was calmly proceeding in his operation, when Timothy, as calmly stepping from his hiding place, exclaimed, "Now, you taral kriter, say yer prayers as fast as ever you can."

This was a short notice for the poor Indian. Before him, and scarcely ten paces distant, stood the tall form of Peabody motionless as a statue; his rifle at his shoulder; his finger on the trigger, and his deadly aim fixed upon him. He was about to run, but he had not time to turn round ere the swift winged messenger had taken his flight; his first moment was his last—the ball pierced his side—he sprang six feet in the air, and fell lifeless on the ground.

No time was to be lost. He immediately proceeded to strip the dead body, and to array himself in the accoutrements, consisting of a hunting shirt, a pair of moccasins or leggings, and was pum belt and knife. A little of the blood besmeared on his sunburnt countenance served for the red paint, and it would have taken a keen eye in the gray twilight and the thick gloom of the surrounding forest, to have detected the counterfeit Indian. Shouldering his rifle he again started in the pursuit, and followed them till they arrived in the glen, where their canoes were secreted. Here they stopped and began to make preparations for their expected supper, previous to their embarkation for the opposite shore. The canoes were launched, and their baggage deposited in them. A fire was blazing brightly, and the party were walking around impatiently awaiting the return of the hunter.

The body of Timothy was safely deposited behind a fallen tree where he could see every motion and hear every word spoken in the circle. Here he had been about half an hour.—

"Night had drawn her sable curtain around the scene;" or in other words, it was dark. The moon shone fitfully through the clouds which almost covered the horizon, only serving occasionally to render the "darkness visible." The Indians now began to evince manifest signs of impatience for the return of their comrade.—They feared that a party of whites had followed them, and taken him prisoner; and at last resolved to go in search of him. The plan overheard by Timothy, was to put the captives into one of the canoes, under the care of five of their number, who were to secrete themselves, in case of an attack, massacre the prisoners, and then go to the assistance of their brethren.

As soon as the main body had started, Peabody cautiously crept from his hiding place to the water, and sliding in feet foremost, moved along on his back his face just above the surface to the canoe which contained the rifles of the guard. The priming was quickly removed from those, and their powder horns emptied.—He then went to the canoe in which the captives were placed, and gave them notice of their intended rescue; at the same time warning them not to show themselves above the gunwale till they were in safety. He next with his Indian knife, separated the thong which held the canoe to the shore, intending to swim off with it, till he had got far enough to avoid observation, then got in, and paddle to the nearest place where a landing could be effected. All this was but the work of a moment, and he was slowly moving on from the shore, as yet unobserved by the guard who little expected attack from this side.—But unfortunately his rifle had been left behind, and he was resolved not to part with "Old Plumper," as he called it, without at least one effort to recover it. He immediately gave the captive notice of his intention and directed them to paddle slowly and silently out, and in going past the headland to approach as near as possible, and there await his coming.

The guard, by this time, had secreted themselves, and one of the number had chosen the same place which Timothy himself had previously occupied, near which he had left his old friend. He had almost got to the spot, when the Indian discovered the rifle, grasped it, and springing upon his feet, gave the alarm to his companions. Quick as thought Tim was upon him, seized the rifle, and wrenched it from him with such violence as to throw him breathless on the ground. The rest of the Indians were alarmed, and sounding the warwhoop, rushed upon him.

It was a standard maxim with Timothy, that "a good soldier never runs till he is obliged to," and he now found that he should be under the necessity of suiting his practice to his theory. There was no time for deliberation; he instantly knocked down the foremost with the butt of his rifle and bounded away like a startled deer in which their rifles were deposited, already rendered harmless by the precaution of Timothy. This gave him a good advantage, which was not altogether unnecessary, as he was much encumbered with his wet clothes, and before he reached the goal he could hear them snapping the dry twigs close behind him. The main body had likewise got the alarm and were but a short distance from him, when he reached the headland. Those who were nearest he did not fear unless they came to close action, and he resolved to send one more of them to his long home before he leaped from the precipice.

"It's a burning shame to wet so much powder," exclaimed he. "I'll have one more pop at the taral red skins." Tim's position was quickly arranged to put his threat in execution. His rifle was presented, his eye glanced along its barrel, and the first one that showed his head received its deadly contents.

In an instant Tim was in the water, making for a canoe. The whole party had by this time come up, and commenced a brisk fire upon the fugitives. Tim stood erect in the canoe, shouting in a voice of a Stentor—"Ye'd better take care, ye'll feel the skiff—Old Plumper's safe and you'll feel him yet, I tell ye."

They were quickly lost in darkness and taking a small circuit, effected a landing in safety. Many a man's life verified his last threat, and Peabody lived to a good old age, having often related to his old friends and neighbors the adventures which gave to this place the name of Peabody's Leap.

The Egyptians.

The Gypsy question has long been a puzzle to Europeans, and volumes without number have been written upon it. The controversy, however, has been a very profitless one, for no jury competent to decide has been appealed to. It does seem strange that the Gipsies themselves, who surely must know better than any other people who they are and whence they have come, should not have been asked to give their opinion. Had this been done, the Egyptian origin of the race would hardly have been debated, for that to which the Gipsies cling more than all things else, that which they assert most earnestly of all, is the fact that they are, in very truth, the sons of Egypt. This is the great secret which they speak of in their own foreign tongue, so that the Gentiles of the nations may not hear it. This, too, is what they teach their children. And it would be a marvelous thing if a nation so widely scattered as theirs should be wholly mistaken. They have had no motive for saying they are Egyptians—no motive whatever—unless it were true. If it be false, it is a falsehood, the telling of which has profited them nothing.

But more than this, it may be asserted that if it had not been for the pride they take in keeping the blood and race of Egypt pure, they would long ago have amalgamated with the rest of the human family, and have ceased to appear as a distinct people on the face of the earth. Make of it what one will, they are at this hour scattered everywhere, from here to Hindoostan, from sunny Spain to frozen Siberia, nursing the pride of the race and training their offspring to do the same. How they would curl the lip in scorn—how they would sneer the simpleton down who would venture to enter their tents in order to teach them that they are anything but what they profess to be, even the representatives of the great nation of antiquity, whose land was watered by the Nile and governed by the Pharaohs.

Jerish Chronicle.

A Kentuckian in Malta.

A gentleman in this city, attached to "Old Ironsides" during her last cruise, has permitted us to dip in his journal, which is as rich as Caliboun's gold mine. The following is peculiarly fine:
We passed three weeks in Malta waiting for despatches. Various plans were devised to kill time, and never did it pass so pleasantly away. Fishing, rowing, dinners, wine suppers, &c., formed our principal amusement and as the harbor was filled with vessels of all nations, an interchange of courtesies was kept up until our anchor was weighed, and "Old Ironsides" again bore the breeze.

At one of the entertainments given on shore by the officers of a British frigate, the conversation turned upon rifle shooting, which led to an animated discussion, in which our officers took a part.
"I have often heard," said the commander of the Thunderer, "that you have fellows in your country called Kentuckians, who are reckoned great shots with the rifle."
"Yes, sir," replied Lieut. N., "their fame is great in that line; they commence practising very early, and in the course of time become excellent marksmen."
"They may be very clever, but I believe we have better shots on board of our vessel."
"I do not belong to that section of the country," observed Lieut. N., "and I have had but little practice with the rifle, but if I mistake not, we have a Kentuckian in company who will stand up for his native State."
"Yes, on all occasions," said our purser, "a tall, muscular descendant of one of the first settlers in the State."
"What say you then gentlemen, to a shooting match to-morrow morning?"
"Agreed with all our hearts," said the Yankees.

The next morning the parties met in a beautiful grove, and placed a target seventy-five yards distant. The English rifle is different from the American, the barrel being shorter and the stock heavier. Six picked men from the Thunderer were on the ground all of whom fired. No one, however, cut the paper (the size of a dollar) although several of the balls were close to it.
The shots were considered excellent by the English and French officers present, and the natives were greatly astonished by the proficiency of the riflemen. The commander of the Thunderer turning to the purser smilingly said:
"What do you think of that? I take it you will find it difficult to come up to it."
"You may think so—but I consider it no shooting at all!" said the Kentuckian.
"Vous monter le haut cheval," said the French.
"Je vous montrait," said the Kentuckian.
"Fire away," said the Englishman.
"I'll bet a wine supper for all hands," said the Kentuckian, "that I make three shots, every one of which shall be better than any yet made, and each succeeding shot better than the first."

"I'll take it," said the Englishman, smiling. The Kentuckian slowly raised a rifle he brought from home and fired. The paper was cut. The second fire was better than the first, and the third "bored the centre." Nothing could depict the surprise of all present; the Englishman acknowledged the corn, and said he was satisfied. The Kentuckian enjoyed a hearty laugh, declaring it was nothing to what he could do—that he would be ashamed of such firing in old Kentucky. Rolling a quid from one quarter of his capacious "receiver" to another, he continued:
"I must have another shot to show you what can be done with a rifle, and to convince my French friend that I am not boasting."
The whole party stood silent in a row and the Kentuckian retreated about forty yards, making the distance from the tree to where he stood near one hundred and twenty yards.—Ordering a paper of the same size as the other to be put up in the same place he reloaded, drew his broad brimmed hat over his eyes, and after taking deliberate aim, he blazed away.
"That was rather too low," he said, "the ball is about the eighth of an inch below the paper, the next time I'll bring it."
On examination, the ball was found to be precisely where he said it was, which increased the astonishment the remarkable shot had produced on all present, with the exception of the Yankees, who were used to it.

"This lick will bring the persimmon," said the Kentuckian, as he raised his piece high up and gradually lowered it and fired. The paper fell from the tree, the ball "driving home" the nail which supported it! Language cannot describe the looks of the foreigners, and particularly the natives, who crowded around the Kentuckian in numbers. That night the wine flowed free at the "Old Admirals," and a more joyous party never met at Malta.

A Moment of Horror.

BY AN ARMY OFFICER.

I do not suppose to tell a story either of romance or of sentiment, but simply to narrate an incident which happened to myself in the fall of 1855.—I was bound westward to the city of New York.

The city was crowded with strangers. After unsuccessful applications at several hotels, at last I obtained lodging at —, kept on the European plan. Here I was obliged to content myself with a chamber on the fourth floor, oddly enough arranged in some respects, as, upon going to it after supper, for the purpose of changing my travel stained dress, I noticed the room had no window, with the exception of a square opening in the wall, through which air and light were admitted from the adjoining room. I dressed and attended the Bowery theatre, reaching my apartment, on returning, about half-past twelve o'clock at night.

When about stepping into bed, I observed the wicket open, and a thought struck me to take a look into the adjoining apartment.—Why it was I know not; perhaps a sense of my own insecurity actuated me.
I got upon a chair and gazed through a window into the chamber. No one was there. It was furnished like my own. A lamp was burning upon the table, and upon the table was lying a bolster, a wadstone, and a pair of large false whiskers.