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Poetry.

An Important Question.

My love, our wedding day is near, Though slow the moments roll, Yet as it comes, a single fear Weighs heavy on my soul!

Selected Story.

The Tax Collector's Wife.

The night shadows were beginning to settle down upon the earth. All day the rain had been falling, sometimes in a heavy shower; the roses and pinks in the garden had a sickly look, for the petals hung low and were heavy with water and with mud that had splashed upon them.

"Well, you can leave it here as well as not. No one would think of my having such a sum of money."

He drew a large wallet from his pocket and placed it in her hands. "It belongs to the government, and if you let it pass from your hands I am ruined," he added.

"No, I have no time to lose. I must reach Richmond by midnight. Good-bye. Take good care of the money, and mind you fasten all the doors."

But the sound of his footsteps had scarcely died away before Mrs. Jacobs began to feel a strange fear creeping over her. Why it was she knew not. She had lived there seven years and slept there every night without doors being even shut.

She was likewise too nervous to work. She put the money in the pocket of her dress, and clasping it tightly in her hands she sat very still, gazing anxiously into nothingness, and listening so intently that she heard the faintest sounds in her ears.

An hour passed. It had been an age to her. Presently she heard a sound. It was not the rain, for there was a perfect lull in the storm. It could not be a neighbor, for she lived on the outskirts of the village, some distance from any one, and she was not likely to be called up in case of sickness.

Again she heard it. It seemed as if a window sash had been slowly raised. Strange that she should have forgotten to fasten them down!

"Why didn't John leave me his revolver?" she mused. "I have nothing with which to protect myself in case I should be molested to-night. It was really an oversight in him."

Again she heard the sound. It seemed to come from the bed room. It was surely the raising of a sash. Then there was the sound of a movement as though some one was entering that way.

Fear nearly paralyzed for a moment, but she quickly rallied, and taking up the lamp, proceeded to investigate the matter. She had scarcely opened the door when she started back with a half-suppressed scream. Two men in hideous disguises were already in the room, and a third ruffian was in the act of crawling through the window.

"What do you want here?" she asked in a faltering voice.

"We want the \$5,000 which you have in keeping for your husband," said one of them.

"You can get no money from me," she said, decisively; "I have no money."

"A pretty fib," he responded. "We will just look into your pocket and see."

In her eagerness to preserve her treasure she clutched the pocket of her dress with both hands, thus unconsciously betraying its whereabouts.

She turned pale when the knowledge of her thoughtlessness was revealed to her.

"You can't have it, you shan't have it," she cried, knowing all the while that they would have it in spite of her.

"We will see," exclaimed the man, seizing her in his arms.

She struggled desperately, but was soon overpowered and the money taken from her.

"Let us go now," said one of the robbers. "You take the money, and I will settle her tongue in a way that it will remain quiet for one hour, at least."

"Don't be in a hurry," said another. "I am hungry, and we can just as well take a morsel here as not."

The other demurred, but he continued: Set to work and get some supper. You have got a good fire and some boiling water, and w-

want some tea. Go to work I say!

Mrs. Jacobs knew that a refusal would only subject her to more indignity and she arose to do their bidding.

She put some more plates on the table, along with such food as she had cooked, and then proceeded to make the tea, wondering all the while if there was any way to regain possession of the money, and dreading her husband's anger and dismay on his return should she fail to do so.

As she took the tea canister from the pantry shelf she saw a bottle labelled "arsenic." Her husband had purchased it on the preceding day, in order to destroy the rats.

Here was the chance of relief and she seized it eagerly. Opening the bottle she put a few grains into the teapot along with the tea, of which she gave good measure, in order to destroy the taste of the arsenic.

A few minutes later the robbers were sitting at the table unconsciously sipping their death.

"They may kill me," mused the faithful wife, "but the money will be found and my husband's honor saved."

After a few minutes, one by one, the robbers complained of being sick.

"I verily believe the woman has poisoned us," said one, and the next moment he fell with a deep groan on the floor.

"I know that she has poisoned us," cried another, "and her own life shall pay the forfeit."

He sprang from his seat and started towards her, revolver in hand; but he fell ere he had reached her.

"Jane," exclaimed the third, "you have saved the money, but you have murdered me!"

How strangely familiar sounded the voice! Forgetting all her old fears in the new, Mrs. Jacobs sprang forward and knelt by the side of the dying man. None tried to harm her now, for all were powerless to do so.

She pulled the disguise—a hideous negro face, with large grinning mouth—from the face of the speaker. One look—then came a scream which echoed through the house like a peal of thunder. The dying man was her own husband.

But little more remains to be told of the sad story. The money was preserved, but the heroic woman is a maniac, raving in an asylum over the murder of her husband.

Miscellaneous.

A Sister's Love.

Who can tell the thoughts that cluster around the word Sister?—How ready she is to forgive the errors, to excuse the foibles of a brother!

—She never deserts him. In adversity she clings closely to him, and in trial she cheers him. And when the bitter voice of reproach is poured in his ears, she is ever ready to hush its hard tones and turn his attention away from its painful notes.

But let him move in a flowery path and she hangs clusters of smiles about him. In watching his favored career, and listening to his eulogy, she feels the purest satisfaction. The cold gave cannot crush her affection for him. It outlives her tears and sighs. And hence, she often wanders to the spot where he reposes, with the fragrant rosebush and creeping honeysuckles, and plants them on his tomb. And who will dare to affirm her love perishes when she fades away from earth? May it not live far off in the glorious land—and live on, increasing in fervor and intensity, during the endless ages of eternity?

Punishment of Lying.

When Aristotle was a Grecian philosopher, and the tutor of Alexander the Great, was once asked what a man could gain by uttering falsehoods, he replied, "not to be credited when he shall tell the truth."

On the contrary, it is related that when Petarch, an Italian poet, a man of strict integrity, was summoned as a witness, and offered in the usual manner to take an oath before a court of justice, the judge closed the book saying "As for you, Petarch, your word is sufficient." From the story of Petarch we may learn how great respect is paid to those whose character for truth is established; and from the reply of Aristotle the folly as well as wickedness of lying. In the country of Siam, a kingdom of Asia, he who tells a lie is punished according to law, by having his mouth sewed up.

Maxims for a Young Man.

Never be idle. If your hands cannot be usefully employed attend to the cultivation of your mind. Always speak the truth. Keep good company or none. Make few promises. Live up to your engagements. Keep your own secrets if you have any.

When you speak to a person look him in the face. Good company and good conversation are the very sinews of virtue. Good character is above all things else. Never listen to loose or idle conversation. Your character cannot be essentially injured except by your own acts.

If any one speak evil of you let your life be so virtuous that none will believe him. Drink no intoxicating liquor. Ever live, misfortunes excepted, within your income. When you retire to bed think over what you have done during the day. Never speak lightly of religion. Make no haste to be rich if you would prosper. Small and steady gains give competency with tranquility of mind. Never play at any kind of game. Avoid temptation through fear that you may not withstand it. Earn your money before you spend it. Never run in debt unless you see a way to get out again. Never borrow if you can possibly avoid it. Be just before you are generous. Keep yourself innocent if you would be happy. Save when you are young, to spend when you are old. Never think that which you do for religion is time or money mispent. Read some portions of the Bible every day.—Counsels for Life.

Frightening Children.

Nothing can be worse for a child than to be frightened. The effect of the scare it is slow to recover from; it remains sometimes until maturity, as shown by many instances of morbid sensitiveness and excessive nervousness. Not unfrequently fear is employed as a means of Discipline Children are controlled by being made to believe that something terrible will happen to them, and are punished by being shut up in dark rooms, or by being put in places they stand in dread of. Children, as far as possible, should be trained not to know the sense of fear which above everything else, is to be avoided in their education, both early and late.—Ez.

SALT FOR HOGS.

I have seen salt fed to hogs for fifty years, and in the last twenty years have fed many heavy hogs, ranging from 300 to 600 pounds net. I fed them all liberally with salt; have never lost one, nor has one been sick an hour. These have been fattened in a close pen, and their principle food was cornmeal made into dough. The dough I have salted, at least once a day. Sometimes my hogs would fail to clean out their trough; in that case I would put a handful of salt in my bucket, with some water; pour it in their trough and they would lick it up with much relish. In addition to salt, I feed coals from the stove. I make it a regular custom to feed coals, and it is astonishing what a quantity a hog will eat, and how healthy and robust it will make him. Let the hogs have plenty of salt and charcoal, and we shall hear less of the cholera. So says the Country Gentleman.

TRY.—Can't-do-it sticks in the mud; but Try soon drags the waggon out of the rut. The fox said, "Try," and he got away from the hounds when they almost snapped at him. The bees said, "Try;" and turned flowers into honey. The squirrel said, "Try;" and up he went to the top of the beech tree. The snow-drop said, "Try;" and bloomed in the cold snows of winter. The sun said, "Try;" and the spring soon threw Jack Frost out of the saddle. The young lark said, "Try;" and he found that his new wings took him over hedges and ditches, and up where his father was singing. The ox said, "Try;" and follow the field from end to end. No hill too steep for try to climb; no hole too big for try to mend.

A Hermit who Abhors Women.

Two miles south of Allibon, says the Rochester (N. Y.) "Express," lives a very singular person named Anthony Tripp, an old man between seventy and eighty years of age. He lives within a mile and a half of the Niagara Falls Railroad, yet he has never seen it, nor the locomotive whose whistle he daily hears. For over half a century he has dwelt by himself, doing all his own household work. During all that time no woman has crossed his threshold, and, indeed, few men. If a woman approaches his premises, he would bar the doors and take refuge in the cellar. With men he would hold no intercourse, except when absolutely necessary or unavoidable. Latterly he seems to have taken even a stronger antipathy to his fellow creatures, hiding himself upon the approach of any person. When Anthony Tripp was about twenty years of age, as the story runs, he fell in love with a pretty neighbor-girl, and was engaged to be married to her. But she was fickle and jilted him. From that time his life was embittered, and he foreswore woman-kind. He was not one of those who think there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught. The falseness of this girl partially crazed him, and he has since dwelt apart from human kind. This should be a warning to young women never to jilt a lover.

Food for Children.

Children do not like fat meat, so give them good bread and butter, and allow them plenty of sugar. A chemist will tell you that both fatty substance and saccharine or sweet substance are eventually oxidized in the body. Sugar is the form to which many other things have to be reduced before they are available as a heat making food; and the formation of sugar is carried on in the body. It has been proved that the liver is a factory in which other constituents of food are transformed into sugar. Now, it is probable that your children really need sugar to keep them well, and it is fortunate that most children are fond of vegetable acids. A saucer of berries, or a ripe apple, is often a better corrective for children's ailments than a dose of medicine; yet the majority of parents give the nauseous dose preference over the fruit. It does seem sometimes as if parents were occupied more in denying than gratifying their children's appetites. This is neither necessary nor fair. They get as tired of bread and milk as you would. And what comes of it? Simply, that as soon as they have an opportunity, they indulge their love for fruits and sweets to excess.

A Beautiful Idea.

Away among the Alleghanies there is a spring so small that a single ox, in a summer's day, could drain it dry. It steals its unobtrusive way among the hills till it spreads out in the beautiful Ohio. Thence it stretches away a thousand miles, leaving on its banks more than a hundred villages and cities, and many a cultivated farm, and bearing a half thousand steamboats. Then joining the Mississippi, it stretches away and away some twelve hundred miles more, till it falls into the emblem of eternity. It is one of the greatest tributaries of the ocean, which, obedient only to God, shall roar and roar till the angel, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, shall lift up his hand and swear that time shall be no longer. So with moral influence. It is a rivulet—a rivulet—a river—an ocean—and as boundless and fathomless as eternity.

HUMAN LABOR.—Human labor is a thousand little rills that replenish the fountain of man's existence. It rends the rocks assunder to build the marts of commerce, it sends its tiny but powerful roots into the soil, that the crops may in due season fructify and replenish and gladden the earth; it dives into the darkened mine, where cheering sunlight never penetrates, to bring forward some of the most important necessities of modern civilization—for where would that civilization be without the product of labor? As we value the products of labor, how much more should we esteem the intelligent agencies by which they are produced? In whatever sphere of action it may be, labor is honorable, and there is at times a moral heroism and spirit of self-denial exhibited which renders it sublime.—Ez.

A Broken-Hearted Rooster.

Thomas Roach, keeper of a chicken ranche on the old San Jose road, purchased several months ago, a lot of fine cropple-crowns, which he kept aloof from his less aristocratic fowls in a small yard. The chief of this family was a large black bird of an exceedingly haughty disposition. He was monarch of all he surveyed till about a week since, when Roach procured a white bird of the same breed and turned it into the yard of cropple-crowns. The two male birds immediately joined in battle, which after a gallant display of courage by both contestants, resulted in the defeat of the black cropple. The unsuccessful bird took its life was no longer worth possessing since honor had departed. The bird was seen trying to kill itself with its own spurs. Not succeeding it tried to jam its head under a gate but again failed. It flew upon a barrel half filled with rain water, and, carefully surveying the situation, plunged into the cask. Roach ran out and found the bird with its wings closely folded to its side, its beak open, apparently endeavoring to repress the natural struggles of self preservation. It was speedily rescued from its dangerous situation, but it refused to take any further interest in life, and after a few days of mental torture and physical suffering it died.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Wait and Hope.

This is a world full of trouble, full of disappointment, as we all know; but there is, after all, no folly so great as that of ceasing to invite the smiles of hope; not only because her smiles are so sweet, but also because while we live, there must always be some sorrow awaiting us. We can no more stand still in life than we can turn back. When we have no desire to go on, invisible forces are at work to compel us to do so. There are things we must do; people we must meet; events that will accrue to us. We cannot believe that the deeds will all be such as we must regret, the events all sorrowful ones, the new acquaintances all enemies. And since we may do good, and have good done to us—since true hearts may meet ours, though we to-day do not so much as know that they beat—what may we not hope?

Keeping the Tongue.

Keep it from unkindness. Words are sometimes wounds. Not very deep wounds always, and yet very irritating. Speech is unkind sometimes when there is no unkindness in the heart; so much the worse that needless wounds are inflicted; so much the worse that unintentionally pain is caused. Keep it from falsehood. It is so easy to give a false coloring, to so make a statement that it may convey a meaning different from the truth, while yet there is an appearance of truth, that we need to be on our guard. There are very many who would shrink from telling a lie, who yet suffer themselves in such inaccurate or exaggerated or one-sided statements that they really come under the condemnation of those whose "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."

Keep it from slander.

The good reputation of others should be dear to us. Sin should not be suffered to go unrebuked; but it should be in accordance with the Scripture method: "Go and tell his fault betwixt thee and him alone." And it shall be borne in mind that what is too often considered as merely harmless gossip runs dangerously near, if it does not pass, the concealed line of slander. A reputation is too sacred to be made a plaything of, even if the intent be not malicious.—American Messenger.

Vice President Wilson was engaged to be married to Mrs. John A. Jackson, of Williamson county, Tenn., and the marriage was to take place on the recovery of his health. It was mainly to soothe that he visited Nashville last spring. They met first at Washington, and he had kept up a constant correspondence since. Mrs. Jackson was one of the most distinguished and highly cultured ladies in the South.—Chicago Tribune.

To Cure a Cough.—Take muriate of morphia 1 grain; glycerine 2 fluid ounces. Mix. Dose, a tablespoonful when the cough is troublesome.

Foreign makers are reducing the weight of their carriages.

Hope.

I am the child of the morning. I attend the bright spirits of the fairy world, and gaze with the eye of an eagle upon the burning sun as it careers on high. I am not the offspring of poetry, although I often flit across the poet's world. I drink of the stream that flows from the regions of romance, and refresh myself among mines of sparkling rubies that are scattered along my path. Years are to me as nothing, for I am not the servant of time. Go ask the martyr at the stake what will cheer him when the fagot blazes at his feet. He will answer, Hope. Ask the plague-stricken wretch, whose very touch is contamination, and the air he breathes is poisoned, that sustains him in his agony? He will answer Hope! Without me, fame would lure but few to her blazing temple, for I cheer them on. When they are weary I point them onward. When they slumber I awake them, and when mists surround them, and they know not where to tread, I clear them away. I open the path before them, smooth its ruggedness, lure them onward with my "siren song" through delightful meadows, through groves, and by refreshing waters. I have seen the being bereft of me hold the dagger in his hand, while his raised arm and bared bosom told his determination. I have then returned—I have whispered in his ears—the dagger has fallen at his feet—the glow of health revisited his cheek—he has embraced his beloved, and shed tears of joy around the home I have thus given him. Think you that the incarcerated in the dungeon broods over nothing but his wrong? That he dreams of nothing but revenge? No, no, I hold my magic glass before his vision, and the prison walls expand—flowers blow in his path—music in his ear—and those he loves, he again embraces, and these are alone for the innocent. I strengthen his pleasure—I forsake the wretched culprit, he dies not like a man. My habitation is not the drak soul of the ungrateful, for I would lead him aright, point him to other worlds, reveal floods of light of life, and knowledge he would cease to glory in his nothingness, to acknowledge himself the dark being of chance.—Melton.