

THE BLUE RIDGE BLADE.

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SPEAK NO ILL.

Nay speak no ill—a kindly word
Can never leave a sting behind.
And, oh! to breathe each tale we've heard,
Is far beneath a noble mind.
Full oft a better seed is sown
By choosing thus the kinder plan;
For if but little good be known,
Still let us speak the best we can.

Give us the heart that fain would hide—
Would fain another's faults efface;
How can it please a human pride
To prove humanity but base?
No! let us each a higher mood,
A nobler sentiment of man;
Be earnest in the search of good,
And speak of all the best we can.

Then speak no ill, but gentle be,
To other's failings be your own;
If you're the first to fault to see,
Be not the first to speak it known.
For life is but a passing day,
No lip may tell how brief its span;
Then, oh! the little time we stay,
Let's speak of all the best we can.

Cousin Bob.

It was an odd-looking old ring, set with a single opal. Not the sort of a ring, by any means, usually chosen for a wedding-ring. But it had been in the Redfern family for ever so many years, and on the bright summer morning, when Jack Redfern was to make pretty Susan Wheatley his wife, he brought the opal ring, and with it a string of old-fashioned, pinkish-tinted pearls.

"I have always heard that opals are unlucky," said Susan, "why didn't you get a plain gold band, Jack?"

"It was my mother's wedding-ring, and my grandmother's, and my great-grandmother's, and maybe even further back than that."

A year had sped by. In the waning brightness of departing summer, Susan sat in the old trying-place alone. The quaint opal ring glittered on her finger. She touched it caressingly, turned the stone to catch the sunlight, her pensive eyes full of unshed tears, a tender smile parting her lips; as she thought of her happy bridal morning, only one short year ago.

For Jack was gone! Gone off over the seas; never to return, perhaps; gone, and not one word or line had come to her since that terrible night of his going. But she waited and hoped with that faith which is born of deathless love.

Jack, fond and proud of her in his masculine fashion, had been prone to be jealous. Without cause, as he confessed himself, but the miserable falling seemed to be part and parcel of his nature.

One afternoon, Susan had gone into her garden to weed her flower-beds, while awaiting her husband's return.

"Susan!" called a pleasant, lazy voice.

She dropped her rake and looked up. It was only Bob—her cousin, Bob Wheatley.

"Why, Bob, how you startled me!" she said.

"Will you come in? But I'm very busy."

The young man snatched in.

"You're always busy, it seems to me; Susan, when I'm about," he said with a smiling sort of impudence. "Won't you shake hands with a fellow, for the sake of old times?"

A flush rose in the young wife's cheeks; but she gave Bob the tips of her fingers.

In her girlish days, Susan had been a good deal admired—for her own sweet face and winning ways, for the most part; but in a few cases, the fact that she would inherit the old Wheatley Homestead served to enhance her attractions.

Her cousin Bob had been one of her most assiduous admirers. He followed her like a shadow and even after her engagement to Jack Redfern, was a little disagreeable by his marked devotion.

After her marriage, on one occasion, Cousin Bob had excited Jack's jealous anger by making himself over-attentive to Susan, and some pretty hard words had passed between them.

Bob took the finger-tips she offered, held them an instant, and then carried them to his lips.

"How dare you?" cried Susan, snatching her hand away; then picked up her rake and went on with her wedding.

"Let me do that for you, Susan," he said after a minute. "If you were my wife, you shouldn't drudge like a slave."

Susan gave him a blazing glance.

"But I am not your wife, and glad enough I am of it," she replied. "Go away Bob; I don't want you here when Jack is absent."

Bob laughed an ugly, provoking sort of laugh.

"I suppose not. You're afraid he'll come and find me here, the jealous brute. But I am not going."

"Then I'll go myself," said the young wife, and left the garden.

Bob stood irresolute a minute, half regretting what he had done, half inclined to follow his cousin, and beg her pardon. Something glittering in the mound at his feet caught his eye. He stooped and picked up the old opal ring, which had always been a little large for his cousin's finger.

His first impulse was to return it to Susan at once; his second was to keep it, and pay her off for treating him so scornfully.

He slipped it in his vest pocket and

took his way to the village tavern. The place possessed a great charm for Bob. He ordered a bottle of wine, and then brandy and seltzer, and by sunset was not quite himself. Lounging in the tavern porch he saw Jack Redfern coming down the road, a wicked thought flashed through his excited brain.

"He's coming in. New boys," he cried, "look out for some fun."

Jack came in to leave a message with the tavern-keeper, and, having delivered it, was going out again, when a loud voice caught his ear.

"Here's to pretty Susan Redfern!" it said.

He wheeled around. Bob was just in the act of drinking his glass.

"How dare you trifle with my wife's good name?" demanded Jack.

Bob laughed scornfully.

"When a woman shows a fellow favor, he dares everything," he answered and held up his right hand.

On the little finger gleamed the opal ring. Jack saw it, and his dark face flushed crimson. He cleared the distance between himself and the speaker with one bound, and before the bystanders could interfere had felled Bob to the ground.

"Stand back, neighbors," he panted as he tore the ring from the prostrate man's finger. "I'll have his life for it."

But the bystanders interfered, and Bob was got out of the way.

Jack went home, with all the brightness of his life dashed out. His young wife met him at the door, in the silver shine of the spring twilight. He caught her, and held her at arm's length.

"Susan," he said angrily, "where is your wedding-ring?"

"Why Jack," flushing and speaking with embarrassment, "it was on my finger, I hope I have not lost it."

Her husband threw her from him, with a muttered exclamation, and strode out of the house without a word.

All through the night, from the rising to the setting of the stars, Susan waited, but Jack did not return. She fancied he was angry because her wedding-ring was missing, and wept herself ill over his cruelty.

Morning came at last, and Mrs. Redfern, Jack's mother, appeared. She held the opal ring on her finger, and a letter in her hand from Jack.

"Your husband has returned the opal ring to me," she said in a severe voice. "His letter will explain the rest."

Susan read the letter and then, with the pathetic cry, "Oh, Jack, come back to me!" fell in a swoon at Mrs. Redfern's feet.

The tulips had bloomed, and were withering on their stalks in the garden when she awoke from that awful trance of death. On her white, thin finger glimmered the old opal. Hearing of her illness, and bitterly remorseful for the evil he had wrought, Bob had told the truth about the ring. But it was too late. Jack was gone.

"I'll find him, and bring him back to her, if it costs me my life!" said Bob, in remorse. And with a last look at her death-like face he departed.

Months came and went, and the cry of the little new-born babe was heard in the cottage.

"Jack's little baby," said Susan, as it lay on her heart, "and he may never see it!"

And now in the early autumn, she sat by the old stile, waiting the postman's arrival. She had waited so many, many times, but surely the letter would come to-day; the letter from Jack, assuring her that he loved her still.

The shifting sunlight fell about her fair head; a golden leaf fluttered under and there, across the green turf at her feet. Wife and mother in one, her Bobson thrilled with tender longing. Susan looked at her wedding ring and waited.

A quick, resolute tread on the country road below. Could that be the postman's nag?

Susan looked up, with her heart in a wild flutter. It was not the postman, but a tall, bronzed man.

"Oh, Jack! oh, Jack!"

In a twinkling, Jack had her in his strong arms, and his tears were on her cheeks.

"Oh, Susan, can you forgive me?" he said, with a choking voice.

"There is nothing to forgive," she sobbed, clinging to him. "See, Jack, I have got my wedding-ring! Jack you can never know how my heart has hungered for you. 'Jack,' hiding her hot face in his breast, 'there's someone besides me to welcome you. Can't you guess, Jack? A little, wee baby, Jack, with his father's own eyes. I thought, once, you would never see him, Jack, but thank Heaven you have come."

He could only hold her close to his heart; he had no words to answer her.

"Jack, how did you know?" she asked, at last, when the first rapture of the reunion was over. "Did you get my letter?"

"No," he answered hoarsely. "It was Bob. He followed me across the ocean; found me, and told me everything. Oh, Susan, say you do really forgive me?"

"Come and look at baby," was Susan's reply to that.

So Shrewdness and Ability.

Susan Bitters, so freely advertised in all the papers, secular and religious, are having a large sale, and are supplanting all other medicines. There is no denying the virtues of the Hop plant, and the proprietors of these Bitters have shown great shrewdness and ability in compounding a Bitters, whose virtues are so palpable to every one's observation.—Exchange.

She Got Him.

A girl, young and pretty, but above all gifted with an adorable candor, presented herself before a certain Prussian lawyer. "Monsieur, I came to consult you upon a grave affair, I want to oblige a man I love to marry me in spite of himself how shall I proceed?"

The gentleman of the bar had of course a sufficiently elastic conscience. He reflected a moment; then, being sure that no third person overheard him replied unhesitatingly: "Mademoiselle, according to our law you already possess the means of forcing a man to marry you. You must remain on three occasions alone with him; and then you can swear before a judge that he is your lover."

"And that with suffice, monsieur?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, with one further condition, which is, that you will produce witnesses who will make oath to their having seen you remain with the individual said to have trifled with your affections."

"Very well, monsieur, I will retain you as counsel in the management of this affair. Good day."

A few days afterward the young girl returned. She was mysteriously received by the lawyer, who scarcely giving her time to seat herself, questioned her with the most lively curiosity. "Well, mademoiselle, how do matters prosper?"

"Oh, all goes on swimmingly. I have passed a half-hour with my intended. I have been seen to go up stairs and come down again. I have four witnesses who will affirm this under oath."

"Capital, capital! Persevere in your designs, mademoiselle, but mind, the next time you consult me you must tell me the name of the young man we are going to render happy in spite of himself."

"You shall have it without fail."

A fortnight afterward, the young person more naive and candid than ever, knocked discreetly at the door of her counsel's room. No sooner was she within, than she flung herself hastily in a chair, saying that she had mounted the stairs too rapidly, and that emotion made her breathless. Her counsel endeavored to reassure her, putting his arm around her to keep her from falling and offering her every assistance.

So she said, "I am much better."

"Well, now do tell me the name of the fortunate mortal you are going to espouse."

"Are you very impatient to know it?"

"Exceedingly so."

"Well, then, the fortunate mortal be it known to you, is yourself," said the young beauty, bursting into a laugh.

"I love you, I have been three times a wife to you, and my four witnesses are here below, ready and willing to accompany us to the magistrate," gravely continued the narrator.

The lawyer thus fairly caught, had the good sense not to get angry. The most singular fact of all is, that he adores his young wife, who, by the way, makes an excellent house-keeper.

The Beginning of Guns.

In 1346 cross bows were in pretty general use among the English, but a new era in war was to be inaugurated, for with the army of Edward III. (at Cressy) came five small pieces of cannon, a species of weapon supposed to be unknown in France, though cannon are spoken of in a sea engagement in the 13th century between the King of Tunis and a Moorish king of Seville.

By whom the five pieces of cannon were made is uncertain; but Le Blond, in his "Treatise on Artillery," says that the earliest guns "were of very clumsy and inconvenient make, being usually formed of several pieces of iron fitted together lengthwise, and then hooped with iron rings; and as they were used for the throwing of stones of prodigious weight, they were of enormous bore."

The "Dictionnaire Militaire" (1758) asserts that cannon "were known in France," according to some authors, in 1338, under Philip, but known of only "Nevertheless," says Voltaire, "till the reign of Charles VIII., artillery continued in its infancy. They did not make use of artillery in sieges till the reign of Charles V. King of France; and the spear was their principal weapon till the reign of Henry IV." No more mention is made of cannon in the English wars until 1405, when we are told that, at the siege of Berwick a shot from one great gun so shattered a tower that the gates were at once thrown open by the alarmed garrison. In the year 1400, James the Second of Scotland lost his life by the bursting of one of these rude implements of war. At the siege of Roxburgh, standing in the vicinity of a gun which was about to be discharged, the rude mass composed of 7, 1492, in Alsace, and ends with one which fell February 12, 1875, in Iowa county, Iowa. There are none between 1492 and 1763, but most of the years since the latter date are represented, and some years by several specimens. Nearly every country in the known world is represented in the list. The entire collection is in one of the buildings in Amherst College. Mr. Shepard makes one statement which will surprise most persons. He says: "There have been several instances of death occasioned by meteoric stones. Two monks in different places were thus killed in Italy, and two sailors on ship-board in Sweden."

—Already three claims to the \$15 bounty offered by the Princess Louise for triplets have been made within a fortnight.

A Female Robinson Crusoe.

In the spring of 1833 the small schooner *Poor es Nada*, built at Monterey, was chartered by Lewis T. Burton and Isaac J. Sparks for an otter-hunting expedition from Santa Barbara to the coast of Lower California. The schooner sailed in May, but the trip not proving so successful as was anticipated, she returned as far north as San Pedro, where she remained at anchor during a portion of the month of August of the same year. It being known that the small island of San Nicholas, situated about seventy miles southwest of San Pedro and a little further southeast from Santa Barbara, was inhabited by a number of Indians, the *Poor es Nada* was dispatched to remove them to the main land. Nineteen men, women and children were taken on board the schooner, which was preparing to depart when one of the Indian mothers discovered that two of her offspring had been forgotten and left on the island. With true maternal devotion she sprang into the water and swam to the shore in search of the missing children, one of which was 3 years of age and the other an infant unable to walk. Her hurried search was unavailing, and, abandoning all hope of finding the babes, she returned to the beach just in time to see the schooner sailing away with all her friends on board. She called frantically for some one to take her to the vessel, but received no reply but the one sad word, *mangana* (to-morrow), which never ceased to ring in her ear and was repeated on her dying bed. The schooner never went back to the island, which was not again visited until 1851, when George Nidever, an otter hunter, stopped there for a few days. He was not previously aware that the place was inhabited, but on his occasion he became convinced that such was the case. He noticed three small circular in closures about two hundred yards from the beach about a mile apart. They were about six feet in diameter made of brush, the walls five feet high, with a small opening on one side. Near these openings were sticks of driftwood stuck in the ground in the form of a tripod, supporting tried blubber. These inclosures appeared to be simply wind breaks, affording no protection from rain. He also saw a mysterious footprint, and judged to be that of a woman from its small size and arched centre. An approaching storm obliged Nidever's vessel to leave the island without allowing him to pursue his investigations any further. Mr. Nidever, having seen many other on his visit to the island made a second during the winter of 1852, and being requested by the Mission Fathers of Santa Barbara, he and a party determined to make a careful hunt for the supposed lone inhabitant of the island. Within half a mile of the head of the island they discovered a basket in the croth of a bush or small tree, covered with a sealskin and containing a dress made of shag-skin—a seawolf common in that section—carefully folded up, and several pieces of skin similar to those of which the dress was made; also a rope of seal sinews, shell fish-hooks, bone needles, etc. As it was late and time for them to return to their boat for the night, Mr. Nidever scattered the contents of the basket on the ground, so that upon his return he could judge of the presence or absence of the owner by finding them gathered up or remaining as he left them. The following four or more days were spent in other hunting, and before the search for the Indian woman was renewed a southeast gale compelled them to seek a more hospitable harbor at the island of San Miguel. A third expedition made to the island in 1853 by Nidever, Charles Brown and four Indians from the Santa Barbara mission were more successful. On the day after landing Mr. Brown discovered the object of their search at a distance, and cautious approaching in an opposite direction from the remainder of the party came close to her without being observed. She was sitting cross-legged, skinning seal blubber with a rude knife made of a piece of hoop-iron driven into a piece of wood. There was no covering on her head excepting a thick mass of matted hair of a yellowish-brown color, due to the exposure to the sun and air. The hair was short, as though the fine ends had rotted off. She would occasionally raise her hand and shake her eyes and look toward the other men on a sandy plain near the beach, whom she evidently saw. The balance of the party were now signaled in order that she might be captured if the attempted to escape. To the surprise of all she made no attempt to get away, but greeted each one as they approached with a bow and a smile, and chattered all the time in a dialect that none of them understood, although the Indians accompanying Mr. Nidever were acquainted with several Indian dialects. She was talking apparently to herself, from the time Mr. Brown approached within hearing distance until she was made aware of his presence. The expression of her face was pleasing, her features were regular, and her complexion much fairer and her form more symmetrical than that of the Indian women on the main land, and she is believed to have belonged to a different and superior race. By signs and other means of communication she was made aware that they wanted her to accompany them, and without any apparent hesitation she made ready to follow. In their course to where the schooner lay at anchor they found a beautiful

No One to Blame.

The other day when a house on Fifth street took fire and was saved by the firemen in a damaged condition, they set about trying to discover the cause of the accident, and in so doing questioned various inmates of the family. The head of the house had his theory all ready.

"It is my opinion," he began, "that some enemy of mine climbed to the roof and emptied coals on the shingles."

The idea was laughed at and the wife said:

"Well, there was a lamp up stairs, but it was not lighted. Now, if the rats got hold of matches and tried to light that lamp, they would just as quick throw a lighted match on the bed as to blow it out. I don't say they set the house afire on purpose, but you know how careless rats are."

The theory didn't hold with the firemen, and the oldest daughter was called upon.

"I expect it was spontaneous combustion," she began. "You see, in my room up stairs, where the fire broke out, there was a hole in the chimney. I didn't like the smoke coming in my room, so I stuffed the hole full of straw. It may be that the straw and mortar and the bricks caused spontaneous combustion."

The firemen were about to accept her theory when the small boy of the family came up and said:

"I know all about it. Ye see, Bill Smith he was on the shed a heavin' snow balls at dogs. Tom, the feller with one arm, was in the barn playin' with my goat. That Turner gal she was on the fence out there callin' names, and her mother had the clothes line and was tryin' to lasso a stick of wood off a wagon in the alley. I went down in the cellar to see if my mud turtle had got away, and I was just trying to set the cat on him when I heard father fall down stairs and mother give a yell, and that's how the house got afire, and now I won't have to go to school for six weeks."

Meteoric Stones Catalogued.

Mr. Charles U. Shepard, of New Haven, Conn., writes to the *Industrious Journal* for fuller information concerning the alleged meteoric stone of recent notoriety, and expresses an earnest desire to procure a piece of it to add to his large collection. Mr. Shepard has been informed of the facts, or rather the want of the facts, in the case. His letter states that he has been for forty years a diligent student of meteorology, and that he has accumulated the largest collection of meteoric stones in the United States, if not in the world. He forwards a catalogue of his collection, showing the number of stones and the date and locality of their fall. The collection embraces over 300 meteoric stones and meteoric irons. The total weight of the collection is about 1,200 pounds. The largest iron, procured from Colorado, weighs 482 pounds, and the smallest one, from New York, weighs half an ounce. The largest entire stone procured from Muskegon county, Ohio, weighs fifty-six pounds, and the smallest one, from Sweden, weighs less than fifty grains. The specimens have been gathered from all parts of the world. The catalogue begins with one which fell November 7, 1492, in Alsace, and ends with one which fell February 12, 1875, in Iowa county, Iowa. There are none between 1492 and 1763, but most of the years since the latter date are represented, and some years by several specimens. Nearly every country in the known world is represented in the list. The entire collection is in one of the buildings in Amherst College. Mr. Shepard makes one statement which will surprise most persons. He says: "There have been several instances of death occasioned by meteoric stones. Two monks in different places were thus killed in Italy, and two sailors on ship-board in Sweden."

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—It is asserted that from the summit of Mount Etna the circle of vision has the enormous radius of 150 miles. The habitable zone of the mountain is very fertile, and sustains a dense population—1424 to the square mile. Rodwell says the gigantic chestnut trees of Carpinello are no myths, but sober realities. He asserts that the diameter of the trunk of one of them is twenty-five feet, and that a public road passes through the much-decayed trunk of the largest, the Castagno di Cento Cavalli.

—It is estimated that there are in the State of New York no less than 6400 ecclesiastical organizations of all denominations, occupying nearly as many edifices, which furnish seats for 2,600,000 persons and have an enrolled membership of 1,300,000 in round numbers. The total value of these church edifices and the lots which they occupy is about \$101,110,000, to which should be added \$16,500,000, the value of the parsonages and other real estate belonging to the various denominations.

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BRIEFS.

—It is rumored in Berlin, that Queen Victoria will, during the present year, pay a visit to the grave of the late Princess Alice.

—It is suggested that New Haven, Conn., celebrate on the next 4th of July the 100th anniversary of the invasion of that city by the British.

—London converts her public bath houses into gymnasia for the winter, under the provisions of an act of Parliament passed at the last session.

—In November there were five four-masted ships in San Francisco harbor, which the *Bulletin* of that city calls a maritime phenomenon.

—The stock of grain in Boston elevators is only 200,000 bushels, against 1,100,000 bushels at the same time last year.

—Joseph Milmore, the sculptor, has received a commission to execute busts of Lord Lorne and wife, for the city of Ottawa.

—Of the 907 students at Eton, one is a marquis, one an earl, one a viscount, two are counts (foreign), thirteen are lords, thirty-eight are honorables and three baronets.

—Dr. David Laing, the well-known investigator of Scotch antiquarian literature and keeper of the National Library at Edinburgh, died recently at Porto-Bello.

—M. Ambroise Thomas, the composer of "Hamlet" and "Mignon," was married recently at Nancy, to Mlle Elvire Remy, a sister of Mue. Montigny Remy, the pianist.

—The Bordeaux Mint, the scene of the recent misappropriation of MM. Rothschild's silver, is to be closed and the staff transferred to Paris, which will now be the only French mint, Strasbourg having become German.

—The death is announced of the German painter Nerly, who has been living in Italy since 1820. He was acquainted with Goethe and Byron, and is mentioned in the respective biographies of the two poets.

—The Berlin police have lately found that at least one tenth of the population of that city live in cellars. The mortality among them is great. Half of the cases of the city are excessively crowded.

—The silver mounted Malacca cane of Judge Lynch, the founder of Lynchburg, Va., and the originator of Lynch law, and his inkstand, are in the possession of Mr. E. J. Withers, of Henderson, Ky.

—Mrs. Appel, said to be the oldest person in Cincinnati, died there several days ago, at the age of 97 years. She was active up to the time of her death. A singular feature in connection with the woman is that she never shook hands with George Washington.

—A lady in a Franklin county (Me.) town in providing for the twenty-first anniversary supper of her son, an only child, set upon the table a dish of preserves that were put up in August, 1827. They were first tested on the centennial day of his birth, again when seven years of age, and also at fourteen.

—New discoveries of gold have been made in Siberia, near the source of the Konissar, and a nugget of gold, weighing 147 pounds, the largest ever discovered in Russia, and probably the largest in the world, has been found on the banks of the Upper Tunguska, about 100 versts above the river's mouth.

—The Special Relief Committee of the Odd Fellows of Memphis, Tenn., have made their report, and they received \$18,061 in contributions during the prevalence of the yellow fever. Ninety-five members of their fraternity died, and of their families, 134. The number of widows is 54, and the orphans 150.

—Judge Junkin, of the Court of Common Pleas, of Juniata county, Pa., in a recent case against an employee of the Pennsylvania Railroad for shovelling coal on an engine on Sunday, held that on long lines of railroad "both necessity and charity require that trains carrying live-stock and perishable freight be run upon Sunday, and the statute of 1794 is not violated thereby."