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THE TOUCH OF THE WAND.

Before my love and I had met,
The budding larch was clad with green;
No bitter wind was to be feared,
The gold locks of the garden's queen,
The chestnut from his kingly throne
Reigned over the dew lawn, and yet
Their grace they had not wholly shown
Before my love and I had met.

Before my love and I had met,
The skies were soft as now they be;
The breeze that kissed the violet
Shook white snow from the hawthorn tree;
With breath of life's freshness blown
My heart was lifted up, and yet
There was a sweetness all unknown
Until my love and I had met.

Before my love and I had met,
The earth was good, the fields were fair,
The land where suns shall never set,
Can God's own hand be plainer there?
All joy of earth in joys unknown
Is gathered up, but we had yet
One hope the less before the Throne,
If I had then had never met.

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—William Waterfield, in the Cosmopolitan.

MRS. QUIGLEY'S RUSE.

BY JANET BRUCE.



DECIDEDLY Mrs. Quigley is a remarkable character. There are only a few who recognize this fact. Mrs. Quigley, herself, would be surprised to hear that she differed from her neighbors in any way, except in making better bread, pies, cake, etc., in having the proud distinction of getting her washing on the line every Monday morning when her neighbors have only advanced to the point of washing up the breakfast dishes; and in understanding all matters appertaining to house-keeping better than any of them. In these things, Mrs. Quigley modestly acknowledges she does excel; but if any one were to say to her: "Mrs. Quigley, you are a moralist, a philosopher, a satirist and a strategist," she would indignantly deny being any one of these things. That she would not have the slightest notion as to the meaning of the words would only make her denial more emphatic. In appearance, Mrs. Quigley is tall and stout, with a ruddy face, and hair streaked with gray; her eyes are bright and dark. In front, her form is what is commonly called short-waisted, here her apron band reaches its highest point, it descends as it encircles her ample waist, and slopes off in a beautiful bow in the back.

The other day I went over to Mrs. Quigley's to buy some butter. Mrs. Quigley makes the best butter in the country, but she doesn't like to sell it to any but a regular customer. I am not a regular customer; Mrs. Quigley has had all her customers for years. I won't say I am waiting for one of them to die, but I should like to get my butter of Mrs. Quigley.

"Now, you've come far more of my butter, ain't you," she said, as I appeared before her, dish in hand.

I had my diplomatic speech all prepared, so I began:

"You know, Mrs. Quigley, I can't get any butter like yours in town. Mrs. Brooks and the Doctor are coming to tea. They always have such good butter; you wouldn't want me to disgrace myself by giving them the stuff that comes from the store?" Mrs. Quigley had great contempt for "store butter."

"There's others has just as good butter as mine. You're only consatey," said Mrs. Quigley, looking highly gratified.

I disclaimed any tendency toward "consatey" so vehemently that Mrs. Quigley weakened, as she always did.

"You'd talk anybody over; how much 'ud you want?" she asked.

"As much as you can spare," I replied.

"I couldn't give you more'n two pound," she said, taking the dish, and disappearing in the cellarway.

While she was gone I sat looking around the shining kitchen, thinking what an awful amount of work it must be to keep everything in the required state of polish.

"There's a good two pound," said Mrs. Quigley coming into the kitchen, and holding the butter up to my admiring eyes.

"Thank you ever so much," said I, gratefully.

Mrs. Quigley set the butter on the table. She always puts it on the table instead of handing it to me, in order to make me stay and talk with her awhile.

"I've a great mind to tell you something," she said, looking at me with twinkling eyes and waiting to be urged.

"Please do," said I, all attention.

"Course you'd never tell?"

I swore eternal secrecy, and Mrs. Quigley proceeded:

"Well, you know Jake has been a-ruddin' after Min Smith."

"Is it possible?" I said, seeing I was expected to be scandalized.

"Yes; and of all shiftless folks them Smiths is the shiftlesses. I wa'n't a-goin' to work an' slave to get this home fur Jake, and then have that Min Smith a-settin' in my parlor, a-wearin' out my carpet (me a pair seventy-five cents a yard fur)." "I should think not!"

"I was most pestered to death. I didn't know what on earth to do. I knowed there wa'n't no use a-talkin' to Jake, fur when his head's set, it's sot. Jake's the kind of a feller that's always a-layin' down the law about how a woman ought-a be, and then goes and takes a girl that ain't no more like what he wants than a crow."

"I've seen just such men."

"Well, that's the kind of a feller Jake is. I laid awake nights a-thinkin' about it, and at last I struck on a plan to break it up. You know Jake's always said he'd never marry a girl that couldn't make good chicken pot-pie; he's terrible fond a chicken pot-pie; and plague take the luck! if that wa'n't the very thing Min Smith could make. I went over to her house and asked her to come and spend the day with me. She was tickled to death to get the invite. Course she said she'd come. She was a-readin' when I went in, an' the house wa'n't a bit clean. I don't believe the stove'd been blacked fur a week. Pretty house-keepin' that!"

"When I told Jake Min Smith was a-comin' to spend the day he was the pleasedest feller you ever see. He began to talk about what a nice girl she was; how there wa'n't no nonsense about her. Min was to come a-Thursday. That day Jake wore a collar to work an' didn't put on no overalls, but I didn't say nothing. Min come over about nine o'clock and dressed to kill. I made believe to be in a great flutter. I said you'd been in an' took most all my better, so I had to chura that day, an' I'd promised Jake pot-pie fur dinner, an' didn't know which way to turn. Min, she up and said, 'Let me make the pot-pie for you, Mrs. Quigley.' That was just what I was a-fishin' fur. I was a-goin' to ask her to do it, if she hadn't offered, so I said 'twould help me a sight if she'd do it. Cause I wa'n't a-goin' to have that pot-pie good. Jake, he was a-ruddin' to the house fur something or nuther all mornin'; it beat all what a sight of business he had at the house. Him an' Min kep' up a terrible laughin' an' jokin'. Jake ain't much of a hand to joke 'cept when he's mighty pleased about something, so I see he was pretty fur gone. 'Once when him an' Min was a-goin' it pretty high, I slipped into the pantry an' emptied all the baking powder out of the box an' put some flour in."

"That was a bright idea!"

Mrs. Quigley winked one eye knowingly, and continued:

"When it come time to make the dumplings I got Min all the things. I see her a-throwin' in the baking powder; she was bound to, have them dumplin's light. Pete (my husband) wa'n't home that day, so at twelve o'clock Jake came to the house alone. I heard him an' Min a talkin' about the pot-pie: 'What if it shouldn't be good?' Min was a sayin'.

"That ain't possible," said Jake, a-lookin' as sot as melted butter.

"Well, we are all sot down to the table, an' I took the cover off'n the pot-pie. I declare for't I never see such dumplin's in all my life!"

"They surpassed your wildest hopes, eh?"

"They was the awfulest dumplin's," replied Mrs. Quigley. "Why they was that tough you couldn't get your fork through 'em. I helped Min, an' I declare I pitied the poor girl; she looked as if she'd like to sink through the floor. Then I helped Jake; he took a bite, an' I see him a-lookin' around fur some place to put it. At last he swallowed it. I didn't have much else fur dinner that day a-purpose, an' I guess that was the first time Jake Quigley, or any one else, ever got up from my table hungry. When Jake started to go to work he said:

"You needn't wait supper for me, mother, I've got to take a load of hay over to Spring Holler. Then I know'd it was all up with poor Min. Min didn't stay long after dinner. I told her not to be in a hurry, but she seemed in a terrible hurry," said Mrs. Quigley, innocently.

"And your carpet is safe," said I rising to go.

"And Jake, too, fur yet awhile, anyway," she replied, tossing her head defiantly.

As I wended my way homeward with my butter, I mused on the witness of mothers, and thought Mrs. Quigley's ruse might be of use to other mothers anxious for the welfare of their sons and their carpet.—The Epoch.

A Hook and Ladder Company.

There is generally a misconception as to what is meant by a hook and ladder company. The use of the ladder is at once understood, and the necessity of it, the hook is an implement used to pull down portions of buildings with. The hook is among the oldest of implements used for scaling walls, and dates back from medieval times. The scaling ladders are made of a single length of tough wood, with the rungs at right angles with it, and passing through it. Its upper end terminates with a metal hook, which permits it to be attached to the window-sills or copings of a house. In ordinary cases ladders are used, but there are many fires where, in order to obtain access to the upper portions of a house, the hook becomes a necessity. Ladders are not always long enough to reach the desired heights, and then the hooks supplement them.

Hook and ladder companies are essentially life-saving in their duties. To each fire battalion in New York there are generally assigned two hook and ladder companies. There are thirty-six to forty hook and ladder machines, though they may not be all in service at one time, some being under repair. To a hook and ladder company there is given an average of twelve men, and in particular cases there have been as many as eighteen. These men represent the pick of the service as to physique. All of them have passed through the school of instruction, and have been specially trained for their duties. It is not coolness alone that is requisite, but that perfect reliance which comes from well-trained muscles.

On the apparatus is carried in addition to the ladders, which, with their extensions, are ninety feet long, a number of hooks, with axes, crowbars, ropes, life-saving nets, and fire-extinguishers. Or account of the extreme length of the ladders, the apparatus is extended, and there is a steering-wheel, acting on the back axle, which enables the truck to turn sharp corners. The three horses attached to such a lumbering machine must be of the best, for every minute lost in reaching a centre of conflagration means chances of death or destruction of property.—Harper's Weekly.

The "Boss" White Oak Tree.

The largest pieces of white oak that were ever probably sawed to order and shipped to this market have been received by Messrs. Roberts & Case, of New York City. This piece of timber was thirty inches square and fifty feet long, and measured 3750 feet board measure. It weighed 22,500 pounds, railroad standard weight for green oak timber. The tree measured over 34 feet in diameter fifty feet from the ground. Mr. Case says he has handled ship timber for thirty years in this market, and this is the largest piece of white oak sawed to size he ever received. Another piece was also received at the same time which was 20x24 and sixty feet long. The two pieces made 6150 feet and were all that was shipped in two cars, which came from Ohio.—New York Recorder.

If There Were a Hole Through the Earth.

As nobody has ever bored a hole straight through the earth's center of gravity from one surface to the other, it is impossible to say what would happen if a ball were let fall into such a hole. The scientific theory is that the ball would be attracted straight to the earth's center of gravity; that, by reason of this momentum thus acquired, it would pass on through this center far towards the other side; that it would again fall back to and beyond the center, and, after oscillating back and forth like a pendulum, with constantly decreasing swing, it would at last settle to rest at the center.—St. Louis Republic.

THE MINE RAT.

IT PLAYS A PROMINENT PART IN THE COAL REGIONS.

A Big Strike Settled by the Rodents —A Fierce and Hungry Horde —Some Miners Never Kill Them.

"THE mine rat," said a former resident of Luzerne, Penn., to a New York Sun man, "is an institution in the coal regions, and there is nothing the miners respect more when everything is running right. As long as work is going on in a mine on any kind of decent time the rats have no quarrel with any one and everything is lovely. They insist upon certain rights which the miners recognize and submit to without a murmur. It is only when a mine becomes idle and remains so for any length of time that the rats and the outside world antagonize one another. Even then the miner's respect for the mine rat will permit him to take measures against it only so far as it is necessary to preserve himself, his family and his property."

"Miners' strikes have been brought to a settlement more than once through the persistent efforts of mine rats. I remember one strike in particular that the rats forced to an end. This strike was a particularly stubborn one. Both miners and operators refused to budge one particle from the stand each had taken. The bosses declared that grass should grow about the entrance to the mine before they would consent to the demands of the men, and the men swore they would cut and eat that grass, if they had nothing else to eat, rather than yield a single point to the bosses."

"The strike lasted so long that the mules were taken from the mine and turned out to pasture, and when that is done during a coal mine strike it is a certain indication that there is to be a long cessation of operations in that mine. That was the signal for the rats to take a hand in the difficulty. Miners and their families may starve for a principle if they choose, but the mine rat proposes to live, just the same, and, if the miners abandon him and cut off his supplies of mule feed, his chances of purloining or sharing in the miners' lunches or eating a mule itself now and then, he will have to come to the surface and look about him. That is what the rats in this particular mine did when they got tired of waiting for operations to resume. The mine was a big one, and its rat population immense. The rats left the mine and literally took possession of its contiguous village. They quartered themselves in and about the miners' shanties, drove away the cats and dogs, and often made it unsafe for the goats. They lived on the mine too plentiful supplies the miners possessed and became a swarming terror."

"The strike continued and the supplies of the strikers gradually became exhausted. Miners of neighboring collieries, who were not affected by the strike, came to the relief of their impoverished brethren. They sent a two-horse wagon load of provisions to them. A committee took the supplies in charge and stored them in a building from which they were to be distributed according to the necessities of the strikers."

"The very first night of their arrival the storehouse was riddled by mine rats and everything devoured or carried away. Another wagon load was forwarded by sympathizing fellow miners, and a guard set upon the goods. Hundreds of the big, fierce, hungry mine rats charged the guard at night, drove him away, and the second supply of provisions disappeared before them. Four times were the striking miners revictualled in this way, and four times the mine rats captured the stores. This combination of the mine rats with the operators was more than the strikers could hold out against, and they finally went to work on the best terms they could obtain, absolutely beaten by the determined horde of mine rats."

"It is a curious fact that if a mine is abandoned by the workmen either on strike or because of lack of work, the rats will follow them to their homes invariably if the mine lies idle for any length of time, but if a mine has to be abandoned because of accidents, such as fall of roof, gas explosions, or fire, the rats will seek other mines in the neighborhood where work is going on. Then there is trouble and plenty of it.

"The rats already inhabiting that mine object to the horde of newcomers, and regular pitched battles ensue. These

continue for two or three days. Then the situation seems to be accepted by the home rats, and the miners have to take it. The combined armies of rats overrun the mine, and, the regular means of sustenance not being sufficient for the increased demand, the rats become so bold and persistent that not even the mules are safe when left by themselves. I have often heard miners say that on occasion of this kind it was a common thing to find the stable floors covered with hundreds of rats that had been trampled to death by the mules, as it seemed to be a passion with the rats to gnaw the fetlocks of the mules, and they often succeed in eating them entirely away, despite the frantic kicking and tramping of the animals and the scores of their own members that were crushed beneath their feet."

"In one mine, a few years ago, matters became so desperate from the enormous increase of rats, owing to the caving in of a neighboring mine, that the miners had to take desperate measures or surrender the mine to the invaders. It was impossible to keep enough feed on hand for the needs of the mules, and the poor beasts grew so thin that they could scarcely do their work. Even the miners' soap, lamp oil, and other supplies used in their work were devoured by the army of rats that overran the chambers. The persistent animals would gnaw through the tool boxes in incredibly brief time and empty them in a twinkling of all portable and edible stores."

"The miners were forced to bury their dinner buckets beneath piles of coal to keep the contents away from the rats, and even then the hungry animals often excavated the hidden food. Not a day passed but one or more miners would be compelled to fight with a horde of savage rats that disputed with him for the possession of his lunch. The miners at last laid aside their tools and devoted their time to decreasing the rat population of that mine. The mules were taken out, and in all parts of the mine poisoned food was scattered plentifully. This was kept up for three days, and the result was most satisfactory. The third day three mine cars were heaped full of dead rats that were gathered from the tunnel floors, and the two tons of carcasses were carted to the outside and buried in one great pit dug for the purpose. Operations were then resumed, the rats left being on a peace footing."

"As a general thing a miner will not harm a mine rat. Some miners, especially of the old school, would almost as soon think of killing their children as a mine rat except on such occasions as I have mentioned. These miners regard the rats as safeguards and infallible presagers of danger in a mine. They have an instinct, the miners say, that warns them of a pending fall of roof or similar disaster, and when they are seen scurrying away from one section of a mine to another the workmen know that the rats are giving them a danger signal, and they hurry away in response to it. The chances are ten to one that there will soon be a cave-in more or less serious in the part of the mine thus abandoned by the rats, as long experience and observation have amply proved. The superstitious miner believes that the mine rat gives warning of this by some supernatural it possesses, but the practical man explains it by the theory that when a mine begins to work, as the quiet settling of one preparatory to a cave-in is called, the rats are disturbed in their hiding places, and they hurry away to seek places of safety."

"The mine rat is ordinarily as big as two of the common house rat, and is possessed of amazing intelligence. To be called as smart as a mine rat is to receive the highest compliment in the mining regions. It is no infrequent thing for a miner and some particular rat to form a strong attachment for each other, and I have often seen a miner and a big, bright-eyed mine rat lurching together like two old cronies, a quarter of a mile down in the black depths of the earth."

A New Industry For America.

Preparations are being made in this country for the manufacture of a new material for lining vessels. It is made from the cellulose of coconuts, which has the property of absorbing eight times its weight of water. The material, which is made into sacks, is used as a lining for vessels, and it is not only extremely difficult to make a hole in it, but should it be punctured by shot of any other means the rush of water will have the effect of instantly expanding the material and filling up the gap.—New York Telegram.