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WHY IS THE WORLD SO SAD?

"Why is the world so sad, father, why is the sky so red,
When the day and the year is blessed
And flowers are fair and the bird at rest
With the little prince on the queen's fair breast,
Why is the king so sad?"

His pa—for the world he loved aside,
He forgot his heart when his true love died,
And took a princess to be his bride,
And—the king is sad.

"Why is the rich man sad, father, why is the rich man sad,
Built on the hills his turrets glow,
Broad in the market-place spread below,
Garners and wine-vats overflow.
Now, why is he so sad?"

His breath for a lordly palace he sold,
He gave his honor for yellow gold,
He sold for the peace he knew of God,
And the riches he lived—

"Why is the poor man sad, father, why is the poor man sad,
Health and to-morrow's meal have he,
A cottage beyond the sea,
Where children climb about his knee,
Why is he so sad?"

He thought of riches in a man's wealth and grace,
He looked on his humble lot with shame,
And then—back more came,
And then—before he is sad.

"Why is the priest so sad, father, why is the priest so sad,
Little he knows of worldly cares,
His life—consecrated to the service of prayer,
And a host of good spirits attend him there.
Why is the priest so sad?"

He knew how the proud ones spoil the poor,
He knew the rich—
His pa—for his spire weak,
And the world that he would he dare not speak,
And—the priest is sad.

"Why is the world so sad, father, why is the world so sad—
Love is in the air around,
Love in the budding ground,
Love in the wood's resound,
And why is the world so sad?"

Alas for the love it never done!
Alas for the love it doesn't begun,
Alas for the love in every one!
And—this is the world is sad.

—Edith Sessions Tupper.

Heads or Tails.

Marie, I began awkwardly, for I had never proposed before, 'you must know—that I have come for a long time the right—I love you."

Marie said nothing, but sat looking down at her hands, which were twisting a bit of lace that she called a handkerchief. She was sitting before I began. Now she looked distressed.

I did not like to see Marie to look distressed, for then she looks as if she were going to cry. And a crying woman is a cruelty. So for the moment I could not own allow to comfort her.

Marie, I began, venturing with much trepidation to lay my hand softly upon both of hers, what's the matter?

She looked up. Her lips were quivering and a tear, balanced for the start, stood in her eye.

"I don't know what to do," she whispered, brokenly.

"Well," I said, in panic, trying to put fun her to courage.

She reflected accurately for several seconds. Then she went on, almost inaudibly.

"You see, Mr. Transome told me last night what you told me just now."

"Confound Transome!" I said to myself, aside to Marie. "Well, Philip Transome is a fine fellow, you know."

"Of course," said Marie, acquiescing a little too readily, I thought.

"And he's good looking."

"Yes."

"And rich."

"Yes."

This seems to me a rival's good points to counsel the woman you love is rather a tribute on one's generosity. It isn't so bad if the woman rewards some generosity, as, of course she should. But Marie didn't. So I stopped.

"Well, what's the trouble, then?" I asked at length.

"I don't know what to do," she replied, repeating her formal wail.

I began to see. It's hard to decide between two lovers. I could sympathize with Marie, for I had once been in a similar predicament myself.

"You don't know which of us to take?" I suggested, after a minute or two of silence, attempting to put some sympathy into my voice.

"You hate me, don't you?" I ventured with some fear in my heart.

Marie nodded. I felt very complacent.

"And you like Philip Transome?" I continued.

She nodded a second time. I believe I swore at Transome.

"But you can't decide between us. Is that it?"

"That's it," acknowledged Marie, weakly.

"You have tried every way?"

"I have, and I can't"—here Marie blushed, but it was a blush I did not like, because it was for Transome as it was for me—"and I can't tell which of you I hate the better."

The person who sits in the seat of the undecided sits not easily. This I know. And any decision is better than no decision. This also I knew. So out of the sympathy which I had for Marie I made up my mind to help her arrive at some decision, even though it I could help it.

I thought for a long time, but nothing came. Then I looked up at Marie. Her eyes were fixed expectantly on me, although she had instinctively learned of my intention to help her and was awaiting my plan.

"Well," said I, seizing on an idea that just then popped into my head, "since you have tried all other ways, suppose you toss up for us."

"What?" exclaimed Marie, half starting from her chair.

"Toss up for us," I repeated calmly.

Marie sank back in her chair and gazed at me in amazement.

Marie's surprise to my suggestion angered me somewhat. Of course, I can understand that choosing a husband in such a way may seem a little queer to some girls. But they needn't act as though it were so unusual. Besides, there are worse ways.

"Toss up for you?" Marie managed to gasp out at length.

"Certainly," I replied, with some asperity. "Have you anything better to suggest?"

A reluctant "No" came from Marie.

"You'd better toss up, then," I said, decisively, drawing a quarter from one of my pockets and offering it to her.

She took it and gazed at it for a long time. I began to grow impatient, for the coin was like any other of its kind, and I could see no reason why she should study it. Then I saw that her look was the look of one who is thinking. Suddenly she raised her head and gazed steadily at me. And then a smile that I liked strangely well slowly came into her eyes.

"No, you do it," she said, returning the coin. "I don't know how."

We both stood up. "Heads it is Transome; tails it is I," I suggested briefly.

Marie nodded.

I balanced the coin on my first finger. I was sure of the result, and the man never lived who is as lucky as I am. I even began to pity poor Transome. But before this reckoning had much opportunity to grow I flipped the quarter whirling into the air, and, as it struck the floor, placed my foot upon it.

I looked at Marie. "Which shall it be?" I asked softly.

"You," she whispered.

I slipped my foot aside and we both stooped. The laurel wreathed head of Liberty was up.

It was Transome.

We both straightened up. I looked at Marie and Marie looked at me. She was pale and I could not have been otherwise. Had it not been the turn of a coin—and it had turned the wrong way. Without a word, for I was not sure in the way of words, I walked out of the room, seized my hat in the hall and started to open the door and go out into the street.

As my hand was turning the knob something touched me gently on the arm. I looked around. There stood Marie with a little smile—a little bewildering smile—on her face.

"Dick"—this time the smile was still more bewildering—"don't go away. It's—it's you, anyhow."

I saw, and my hand left the door knob. And in the little conference that followed I also have a friend Marie. Such things have happened. New Orleans Times-Democrat.

SNAKES IN COSTA RICA.

The Culebra de Sangre the Most Deadly of Them All.

Costa Rica means the Rich Coast and in most respects it is rich, particularly in the snake family, the most deadly of which is the terrible culebra de Sangre or blood snake.

This variety of reptile does not grow to a large size, and perhaps on that very reason it need to be dreaded, as it is not easily seen. It is red, and resembles a large, swollen vein, ready to burst with blood.

Velasco once had a hound on one of these snakes, and like others it struck at me, but as I had a pair of leather leggins no harm was done, though it was a close call. Not so fortunate was a peon the laborer who was bitten by the same variety of snake. The man was working for a neighbor of mine, and I did not see him until the day after he was bitten. the moment I heard about it I went over to see the poor fellow, taking with me a remedy for snake bite, thinking it would do no harm to try it, anyway. When we reached the men's camp the sight that met our eyes was a sickening one.

The man was bleeding from his nose, mouth and ears, also from his finger and toe nails. How a man could bleed as much as he had, and still live, was a marvel. He had been bitten in the foot, only one fang of the serpent had entered the flesh. The manager of the estate had given him several doses of curarine a powerful vine made in Colombia and much used here in Central America for poisonous bites. We also gave him the medicine which I had brought with me, which made him vomit profusely.

In a few hours' time the bleeding stopped, and next day the poor fellow was sent to the hospital. No one expected that he would live, as the bite is considered deadly, but strange to say he did recover, and in a month's time was at work once more. If both fangs of the snake had entered the foot instead of one, he would undoubtedly have died. I have known a horse to die in a few hours after being bitten by one of the snakes. In the past three years two men in my district have died from snakebite, and in hunting in this country one must always keep a sharp lookout for snakes.—Forest and Stream.

Mrs. Ayer's Remarkable Dinner.

Mrs. Ayer, the wealthy American lady who died in Paris recently, was a great favorite in Parisian society, and may be remembered in London, if for nothing else, at least for a remarkable dinner she gave at the Savoy some three years ago. At the principal table sat the hostess, with the Duc d'Orleans on one hand and the American minister, Mr. Bayard, on the other. There was a musical table, at which sat Mme. Christine Nilsson, Mme. Melba, Mme. Albani, Sir Arthur Sullivan and other notable musicians, while other tables were devoted to the drama, literature, commercial girls, etc. Each table was decorated with special flowers—the musicians' with roses, the unmarried ladies' with white lilies and the "drama" with yellow asters.—London Chronicle.

NOTABLE FIRES.

Others in United States Have Proved the Least Serious.

The largest fire of the year 1897 will not have come to be known as the Aldermanbury street fire in London, the furnace from which, variously estimated at first, has been put officially at $10,000,000. Ten million dollar fires are very rare nowadays in countries equipped, however imperfectly, with apparatus for the extinguishment of fires, and in the United States conflagrations of such dimensions are practically unknown. In former times, however, such fires were not so rare, and what is known as the great New York fire of 1835 involved a pecuniary loss of $30,000,000, which represents, of course, a much larger sum, relatively, than would such a fire today, the purchasing powers of money being probably greater at that time and, moreover, the system of insurance being such that by the failure of a large number of companies the insured were practically left without any compensation for the losses which they sustained. The number of buildings burned in the great New York fire, which started in the Wall street district, was 674, and it was not the firemen who put a stop to it, but the United States marines who came over from the navy yard and blew up a number of buildings.

The Chicago fire of 1871 entailed a loss of $196,000,000 and covered an area of more than 2000 acres, containing 17,450 buildings. The Boston fire, which occurred little more than seven years later, entailed a loss of $50,000,000 and destroyed 800 buildings, but the value of much more substantial character than those burned in Chicago. Only about 20 per cent. of the Chicago fire losses were paid, but 95 per cent. of the Boston losses were paid by insurance.

The fire losses in New York during the past few years have been as follows: 1892, $2,000,000; 1893, $1,000,000; 1894, $1,000,000; 1895, $2,000,000; 1896, $2,000,000. The largest approach to that was in 1845, when there were $8,000,000 worth of property burned in the fire which was supposed to have originated in a cooper's shop on the east side of Hanover square, at the corner of Greene and Pearl streets, on St. Patrick's day, the loss from which was $1,100,000.

Chicago's most serious fire of a conflagrative character was in Hamburg in 1842, when the loss ran from it being $15,000,000. The "great fire" of London took place in 1666, and consumed about three-fifths of the city, but there is no way to say accurate comparison of the loss, and perhaps no such computation was possible. There have been many serious fires in France, but no one of them large enough to take rank in respect to loss among the notable fires of which there is record.—New York Sun.

How Topazes Are Polished Gems.

The first thing necessary in polishing a precious stone is to slit it, this is done by the Philadelphia Times, by means of a thin sheet-iron disk, placed in a horizontal position and revolving rapidly by very simple machinery. Diamond dust is applied to the edge of the disk, and sperm oil is used to keep it from heating.

I have managed a very small quantity of diamond dust will last all day, and not much of it will be lost, in order to prevent appreciable loss, a tube with a raised edge all around it is employed. Two diamond dust wheels are made from bort, or imperfect diamonds.

After being slit the stone is ground on horizontal wheels of lead, brass or iron, and sometimes of wood. These wheels are called "laps," and the process whereby rough stones are polished is known as lapidary, from the Latin word lapidarius. Lapidaries acquire great facility in sharpening and polishing stones, and from a given pattern are able to produce any object required with great dexterity. Diamond, emery, agate or corundum powder is spread on the laps, gradually the particles become imbedded in the laps and the stones yields to them.

The stone is held either with the fingers, by means of the hollow at the end of a stick, and is pressed against the revolving laps. For the last polish the laps are covered with cloth, leather or hard brushes. The facets, or flat surfaces that give brilliancy to transparent stones, are cut by means of a horizontal grinding wheel, by the side of which is placed an upright, disk-like piece of wood. Into this heavy piece of wood, in different places, a pod is stuck, at one end of which the stone is fixed with cement. As the wheel revolves the stone is pressed against it and facet is cut, to make a new facet, the rod holding the stone is simply stuck in another hole in the disk-like piece of wood and is thus given a new inclination or angle.

How Transome's Treasure Was Hidden.

Last discussion in connection with the renewal of the charter of the Bank of France, which has just been prolonged by the National legislature until the end of 1920, has brought to light the measures that were adopted during the year of 1870 for the preservation of the specie and valuables confided to the care of the institution to the extent of over $100,000,000. It seems that the whole of this treasure was packed into some twenty-five thousand cases, marked "explosive projectiles," and was shipped by rail to Brest, where it was "cached" in such a manner in the arsenal that, had even the Germans captured the port, they would never have discovered the hiding place. Indeed, so elaborate were the precautions adopted that neither the people who shipped the cases from Paris nor those who conducted them at Brest had any idea of the contents of the boxes.

ONLY ONE PEARL KING.

A YOUNG CALIFORNIAN'S INTERESTING SOUTH PACIFIC TRADE.

Controls the Pearl and Pearl Shell Markets of Europe and America—How He Built Up the Industry Entering Merchandise for the Beautiful Gems.

It is not generally known that one single merchant, a young Californian, 32 years of age, controls the pearl and pearl shell markets of America and Europe. This monarch of the pearl trade is Samuel Harris. He operates in the Pacific ocean, and he has built up an astounding commercial reputation in the course of eight years. There are plenty of cattle kings in the west, and wheat kings in the east and money kings everywhere, but there is only one pearl king, and that is Harris. Thousands of rare, translucent gems are brought to this country and shipped to Europe by his agents. He deals in mother of pearl shells by the ton, and the magnitude of his transactions has made the private name of Harris, simply, a diamond bearing a large U. S. seal of international importance and a guarantee of genuine kingship.

Harris gathers his gems everywhere in the Society Islands. For eight years he has made these Pacific isles the field of his interesting business. It was on the shores of Tahiti that first he earned his title of king. After years of transactions with the natives whom he employed in pearl diving he stimulated them from passivity to great activity, gaining their confidence and trust by honest and reliable barter. He never made promises to them that he did not keep. He paid them in full the price which they demanded. Himself a disciple of the commissioner, he never permitted them to overvalue a pearl or shell, and they grew to admire him. He controlled the situation at Tahiti. He was king there.

It is said that Harris has been a lover of the delicate gems since his boyhood. Pearls have always been to him the most mysterious, the most wonderful, the most beautiful handiwork of nature. To him, cased in an amiable, delicate temperament, they appealed in a romantic, poetic way. To him each translucent globule represented a tear from the eyes of an ocean bewitched maiden. They were silent tokens of the waters' secret, she who perhaps mourned for a terrestrial lover.

Finally young Harris took a pleasure voyage to the distant Society Islands and saw what made his cupidity in the eyes bulge in their sockets. He saw native children playing along the sands with the richest pearls he had ever seen; he saw the native belles passing by with ropes of pearly gems about their throats, such treasures as would have made a society queen turn pale with envy. Then Harris made his first business trip to Tahiti, and he took with him $7000 worth of merchandise. His burden consisted mainly of tobacco, knives, rope, fishhooks and articles of clothing. These were luxuries to the native Tahitian, and the pearl trader brought back that year in exchange for his merchandise fully $30,000 worth of pearl and pearl shells. He did not consider it a bad bargain and he has been back every year since.

Formerly only the lowest grade pearls were brought to the American market. The finer ones were retained abroad and rarely ever found their way this side of the water. Harris has turned the tables, and now brings to the San Francisco market the most perfect pearls found anywhere. The perfect stones are Oriental in their translucent whiteness or glimmering iridescence. They are finely symmetrical in form and the best are generally pear-shaped, like a falling tear. The hunt for these beauties of the deep goes on incessantly. The same excitement and uncertainty attend the fishing as surround the tireless chase for gold or the determined digging in a diamond mine.

There is the same labor and the oft-repeated disappointment. Now and then a great surprise is brought up by the fearless pearl diver. That compensates for all the past. Lately it was an immense black pearl, the largest of its kind ever unearthed from the fathomless ocean. Harris brought it on his last recent voyage to San Francisco. After careful examination it was found to be absolutely perfect, having a weight of 48 karats. It is valued in the London market at $50,000.

Since 1895 Harris has revolutionized the trade in pearl shells. Only one grade ever found its way to the home of the pearl—Hall, Orange and Japanese. It was generally believed that was thin, flakey and valueless, and sold for $600 a ton. This same worthless pearl shell now commands different grades or varieties, ranging in value from $200 to $1200 a ton.

All shells are purchased in bulk from the native fishers. They bring down their hauls of shell to the young king's schooner as it lies in port, fretting restlessly against the side of the coral piers. They bring down their find here for the king's protection. He sits in state and passes judgment. Harris can tell at a glance what a pile of shells is worth. He is an expert at determining values and he is a shrewd buyer as well, and has never been out by the native experts to avail themselves of his judgment. When a pile of shells is disposed before him he picks out one or two and runs his eye carelessly through the beam, and in a moment can determine the grade, for the natives are clever at pearl culling. No uncommon shells are ever found among the pearl ones. They have not learned yet the trick of deceiving by mingling the good and the bad.—Chicago Times-Herald.

INDIANAPOLIS CURFEW LAW.

Reference to Ward Children and the Street Meetings.

Seventy-five policemen at police headquarters in the crowded temporary station last night in a solid compact body, and this mass of the majority of the law was greeted with knowledge of the curfew law before being introduced to set the law working in all part of the city. Superintendent Colley read the curfew ordinance slowly and distinctly, from which he "retained" to "witness my hand and seal." The enforcement of the law was to begin that night, he said, after finishing the reading. The efforts at first must be in the nature of an experiment. The policemen must not be severe at first, and must always use a great deal of judgment. All children seen out in the streets after 9 o'clock must be warned, and warned in a way that would impress them that the police meant to be obeyed. There must be no jokers with the boys on the subject.

The superintendent called attention to the fact that some children under fifteen years of age had to go about selling papers and those working at night or running errands for their parents or guardians. Some, too, he said, went to entertainments, and to these classes of people special instructions were given. Some boys of eleven and twelve years of age, he said, would probably be objected. Three of St. Paul's curfew ordinance to adopt a ribbon or badge. Some mild murmuring attended the Young Women's Christian Association prayer meetings and other gatherings, and these were also followed by some sort of hoots.

The superintendent said that, while the police were to use good judgment in the enforcement of the law, they were to keep the lookout for violations of it, and to look to all children whom they found out after 9 o'clock. If they were in doubt they should call up the chief and get advice from headquarters. He said that he would be glad to have the co-operation of the people in the enforcement of the law.

After all, a fair aspect of the enforcement of the law, after a preliminary skirmish on the part of a few boys, was presented. Many children were on the streets after the hour, but they were generally accompanied by their parents, and were going home from entertainments. By half past 9 o'clock the streets were almost deserted by children, and the police force was in readiness for any emergency that might arise.

A Precious Bit of Shipwreck.

H. Phelps Whitmarsh writes in the Century of "The Shipwreck of Today," his article being illustrated by Andre Castaigne. Mr. Whitmarsh describes a little incident of one of his companions in the voyage that he made:

Kneeling to an upper bunk near me, a middle-aged Englishman was fastening a not unhandsome chronometer, and learned that he was going to join his wife in California, to whom he was taking the chronometer as a present.

"I expect it will last," he said, shaking it affectionately at the pocket in which he was putting it, "for it has been in the family a good many years. It belonged to my grandfather, who was a captain in the merchant service, and he gave it to my father, who was also a captain, and he gave it to me, and I've carried it for the best part of twenty years, and I've never had it out of order. I'm sure it will be a pleasure to my wife to have it."

Many hands like that would be willing to help the feeble, and would be quick to offer consolation in the time of trouble. Strange, then, that so few do.

"Heaven has given us two ears and one mouth," and this world was meant to be more listened to than talked.

It is not good for man to make a boast.

The wages of sin is debt.

Every dogma must have its day.—Carolyn Wells in the Chap-Book.

If we move our legs mechanically as fast as an auto, it is calculated we could travel about eight hundred miles an hour.

PREPARING A BANQUET.

HOW A BIG FEAST IS MADE READY AND SERVED.

Skillful Management and Careful Execution Necessary—Everything Must Be Done Neatly, Quickly and Systematically Work of the Chef and Assistants.

Few of the many who attend banquets, says the Detroit Free Press, have any adequate idea of how such feasts are prepared, and their appreciation of the countless details that fit together like a piece of mechanism is limited to what they see before them. Usually the mere tickles their palates, the decorations are deemed handsome, and the nimble waiters perhaps come in for a share of the comments. How the whole thing is prepared is of little concern to the well-fed guest, and his curiosity seldom prompts him to peep behind the swinging doors, where a small army of cooks, carvers, dishwashers and others are at work.

To serve a banquet for 150 persons requires no more help, with the exception of extra waiters, than is employed in getting up the regular meals, though this fact is hard to believe until it is demonstrated. The prime minister of the kitchen and its environments is the steward, and his judgment is supreme. Though never in evidence, he is a very busy man, and his responsibility is great. He must not only be a good chef, but a financier, and have as little executive vanity. To him is left the arrangement of all the details. First of all, the price per plate is decided upon, and the steward must then get up an attractive menu, figuring the entire cost to such a nicety that there will be a profit left for the hotel. Steward Lukes of the Russell House was recently asked how it was all done, and he modestly answered: "You had better come and see for yourself."

The banquet is set for 7 o'clock, and it is within half an hour of that time. While the lowering about filling orders for the regular suppers, but the expected little else does not materialize. In the beginning even the decorations are beyond the last touch, electric lights are being tested and the head waiter is drilling his corps of assistants, issuing such orders as, "Make it little more graceful," "Serve guests from the left," and other instructions. The two waiters, his aides-de-camp, see that they are in their places. The long tables have been set, and a few minutes before the dining-room is cleared of everyone except the head waiter, who takes a position at the entrance. In the kitchen the steward is in command and hurries from one department to another to satisfy himself that everything is in readiness, the result of several days' planning.

Everything needed for the banquet is ordered the day before, and the things to be cooked are turned over to the chef, which means that he and his assistants will have their hands full for the day. Some of the dishes can be prepared earlier in the day, but the fish and the birds have to be served hot, and they are put in the oven so as to be done just when that particular course will be called for. Dishes and glasses are important items and for a banquet of 150 persons fully 2500 will be used, and it is safe to assert that very few of them will be broken. To prevent any delay, the dishes and glasses to each course are taken from the store-room and placed in separate piles after having been washed, and are not washed and put away until the guests have left the table. Every bottle is accounted for, and not one is ever lost.

The moment the guests leave the second table down the decorations are begun, the tables are washed and returned to the storekeeper, the silverware cleaned, counted and put away. Within an hour the dining-room resumes its normal appearance, everything in the kitchen has been cleaned and put away, and after watching it all one marvels at the calmness of the hostess.

Very Thin.

Mr. Meekly—Miss Dimsdale, may I—I—I—