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THE SILENT LAND.

Into the Silent Land!
Ah! who shall lead us thither?
Clonds in the evening sky more darkly
gather,
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the
strand.
Who leads us with a gentle hand,
Thither, oh! thither,
Into the Silent Land?

Into the Silent Land!
To you, ye boundless regions
Of beautiful souls! The future's pledge
and band!
Who in life's battle firm doth stand,
Shall bear Hope's tender blossoms
Into the Silent Land!

O Land! O Land!
For all the broken-hearted,
The mildest herald by our fate allotted,
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth
stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great departed,
Into the Silent Land!

—J. G. Von Sals.

THE BIGGS FAMILY.

"So Hiram's folks has made money, eh?" said old Mr. Biggs.

Miss Paulina Prickett had invited the Biggs family to tea, with hot waffles, quince preserves, Sally-lums, angel cake, and the best quality of young hyson, to celebrate the purchase of a new tea-set—white French china with a gold band on the edge—in which she had indulged. Inviting the Biggs family, as Miss Paulina very well knew, was better than advertising for the whole thing in the newspaper, for there was a goodly number of them, and they always talked to everybody about everything. The Biggses seldom invited company themselves, because, like John Gilpin's wife, they had a frugal mind, but they always came in full force wherever they were bidden.

"Yes," said Mrs. Horatio Biggs, "in the book business, I'm told."

"I knowed a bookmaker once," observed Miss Prickett, liberally lading out the golden syrup of the quinces, "as only got ninety cents a day and found himself."

The Biggs family had not been like Dr. Watts' proverbial birds, which "in their little nests agreed." Horatio Biggs had overreached his two younger brothers in business, and had set up a "general store" in Biggsville, out of the result of his sharp practice, with a tall, angular wife, who despised Mrs. Luke because she had once worked in a factory, and scorned Mrs. Hiram because she was a teacher when her husband first met her. Luke Biggs was a selfish, grinding, miserly sort of fellow, and Mrs. Luke's chief end and aim in life was to secure enough cash out of her husband to outdress the other matrons and maids of the neighborhood. Miss Josepha Biggs, the unmarried daughter, made dresses for "the genteel families only," and old Mr. and Mrs. Biggs lived in a wing of the old homestead, and when they were not quarreling between themselves, made common cause against Mrs. Horatio.

Under the circumstances it was not to be marvelled that Hiram Biggs, who had contrived to get an education from his slender share of the family money (a few thousand dollars left by a distant relative, and gobbled up at once by the Biggses), and the young wife that he had married, had found the atmosphere too full of disagreeable electricity, and removed to New York.

"Take my word for it," said Mrs. Horatio Biggs, "you are making a mistake."

"Don't you expect us to support you when you come back here without a cent," said Mrs. Luke, ruefully sighing.

"Hiram's marriage has been his ruin," whispered Miss Josepha. "I offered to pay his wife fifty cents a day to help trim dresses in busy times, but she declined it."

"Elizabeth always was too proud to put up with us plain people," said Mrs. Biggs senior, with the quiet malice that occasionally develops itself in a mother-in-law.

These family details may in some measure account for the animus displayed over the waffles and angel-cake at Miss Prickett's tea party that afternoon.

"Well," sniffs Miss Josepha, "according to my idea of things, book-making ain't no business at all. If it was carpentering now, or the hardware line, or if Elizabeth had energy enough to go into the millinery trade,

instead of paying four dollars in good hard money for a spring hat, as she did when she was staying here in April! But I've no faith in their calculations, and never had."

Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Biggs, however, had ambitions which the family never dreamed of. Hiram's tastes had always been of a refined and literary nature, and several simple stories of rural life which he had ventured to send with fear and trembling to a popular monthly magazine had been accepted and liberally paid for. And Elizabeth, though she could not trim hats, and abhorred the dressmaking business, had a delicate fancy with her pencil in illustrating the ideal dreams of others, and she too tried her luck, and succeeded in the artistic world, much to her own amazement. And as time went on their good fortune became more pronounced. Mr. Biggs wrote a satirical novel which had a wide and brilliant circulation; Mrs. Biggs illustrated a popular poem which was brought out in an edition de luxe. And the young couple became the fashion.

The Biggses of Biggsville, not being literary, were a long time in finding out that their kinspeople were succeeding in the world. At first they declined to credit the thing at all, having a settled idea that the "book-making business," as they persisted in calling it, was but a grade above the avocation of ragpicker. But when at last they realized matters they decided that Hiram and Elizabeth ought to be encouraged.

"I've never been to New York," said old Mr. Biggs. "Folks tell me it's quite a stirring place. I guess I'll go and stay a spell with Hiram's folks. And it'll be a good opportunity for mother to buy herself that new alpacky gown she's been cacklin' about this ever so long."

"I don't see why I shouldn't see the world as well as other folks," remarked Mrs. Biggs senior.

"I shouldn't wonder if I went along too, to get a look at the fall fashions," said Miss Josepha.

"Well, while we're about it," suggested Mrs. Horatio, "why don't we make up a party and get excursion tickets cheap? I've always wanted to see what the city was like myself, only I don't care about paying hotel prices."

Mrs. Luke entered with ardor into the scheme, and the old man sat down, with a single sheet of fibrous paper, a muddy inkstand and a stumpy steel pen tied on a stick with thread, to concoct a letter, in which he formally notified "Hiram's folks" of the pleasure which they might prepare themselves to expect.

The document was brought just as Hiram Biggs was getting into the spirit of his morning's work in his study, with Elizabeth dreaming at an adjoining table, and the breath of a vase of Niphotos roses perfuming the room.

"My dear," said he, looking aghast at his wife, "what are we to do? All the family are coming to visit us! With the proof-sheets of my last novel coming in, and your etchings of 'Wild Rose' only half completed!"

"We must do the best we can, Hiram," said Elizabeth, perplexedly knitting her pretty brows together.

"My darling child, there's no 'best' about it," groaned Hiram, tearing his hair—which, being brown and curly, looked none the less picturesque for the operation. "You don't know the peculiarities of the Biggs family as I do. You will be dragged up and down Grand street, Eighth avenue and the Bowery from morning until night—you will have to visit every show, theatre and picture gallery in New York, and pay all the bills. Your housekeeping will be picked to pieces, your dress criticised, and ten to one my mother will offer to come here and take charge of the baby, while Josepha will volunteer to improve your most cherished drawings."

Mrs. Hiram Biggs glanced with terror at the plump baby who, in charge of its white-capped nurse, was being carried up and down the pavement in front of the house. Then she looked piteously around the pretty Brussels-carpeted library, with its deep crimson-curtained bay-windows, its tall Dracena plants in majolica vases, its oil-paintings and Japanese scrolls, its cage of green parquets, and shelves of china and bric-a-brac, and pictured to herself the whole Biggs family spreading themselves over its sacred precincts. She was only human, too, this young wife; she could scarcely help remembering how Mrs. Horatio had snubbed her when she first came, a timid, shrinking bride, to the Biggs farmhouse: how Mrs. Luke had once re-

fused to lend her twenty-five cents, in Hiram's absence, to pay the charges on a telegram, alleging as a reason "that it wasn't never good policy to have business matters between relations," nor how old Mrs. Biggs had cried and said "that Hiram had shown dreadful poor judgment in selecting his wife," while Miss Josepha had taken especial pains to contradict every statement she made, and Luke and Horatio had ignored her altogether.

Hiram laughed. "My little darling," said he, "I can interpret that look. You shall not be tormented out of your existence to become a convenience to a swarm of relations-in-law, who don't any of them care a copper cent for you. If they had ever treated us decently it would be a different matter. As it is—"

"But, Hiram, you can't send word to your own father and mother and brothers and sisters not to come," pleaded Elizabeth.

"No," said Hiram Biggs, thoughtfully, "I shall do nothing of the sort. But—I shall send no word at all."

"They'll come, all the same," said Elizabeth.

"But," said Hiram, with sparkling eyes, "they don't know where we live."

"They'll look out your name in the directory," sighed Elizabeth.

"It isn't there," said Hiram, chuckling.

"Not there?" repeated his wife.

"Don't you remember that we didn't move in here until the middle of June. How could our names be in the directory?" argued Hiram.

Mrs. Biggs clasped her hands dramatically. "There's a family of Biggses in the next avenue," said she—

"H. Biggs, Books, Stationery, and News Agents." They'll go there."

"Well, let them," said Hiram. "Just as they please, so long as they don't come here. And he threw the letter of Biggs pere into the scrap-basket, secretly feeling himself to be avenged on the family for all the slights and jeers and neglect that they had cast not only on him, but on his gentle little Elizabeth.

"But, Hiram," said Mrs. Biggs, "it seems so dreadful!"

"Not half so dreadful as a visitation of the whole Biggs family would be," said Hiram, with a groan.

But Hiram knew little of the perseverance and energy of the Biggses if he believed that so trifling an impediment as a lack of invitation or a delay in sending addresses would keep out the invasion. It was Canute and the ocean over again; and in three days the whole family arrived, all packed into one hack to save expense, with a perfect Leaning Tower of Pisa of baggage on the roof, the driver perched in front nobody knew how, and Mrs. Luke's two little boys astride of the very apex of the tower.

At the first wholesale grocery store on Barclay street a directory was handed in and duly studied, and the driver, "hanging half-way down, like one who gathers samphire, dreadful trade," was bidden to drive to 26,012 Thirteenth avenue.

"H. Biggs," said Mrs. Horatio.

"Bookmaker and news agent," added old Mrs. Biggs, in a high falsetto. And the man chirruped to his horses and drove on.

"Humph!" sniffed Miss Josepha, who had had the good luck to secure a window, "if this is Hiram's elegant city mansion, it don't come up to my idea of style. Brown brick, with dormer windows, and only two stories high; and the whole front a store, with the shutters up, just exactly as if there had been a death in the family."

"Dear me!" said old Mrs. Biggs, "how you do startle one! But there ain't no crape on the door."

"Mother takes everything so dead in earnest," said Mr. Luke Biggs, scornfully.

"Lemme see," said Mrs. Horatio, crowding across the old lady, and giving her best hat a "poke" not intended by the milliner. "Well, I declare! I guess the bookmakers' business ain't so dreadful full of money after all."

"And a liquor store next door, and a pawnbroker's across the street!" jeeringly observed Miss Josepha.

"Praps that's the way folks lives in New York," said old Mr. Biggs, who was squeezed nearly flat between his wife and Mrs. Luke on the back seat.

"Taint what I expected to see," said Mrs. Horatio, in accents of scarcely repressed scorn.

"I don't know how they can accommodate us all," sighed Mrs. Biggs, vainly endeavoring to straighten her bonnet.

"That's their lookout," said Mrs. Luke, leaning comfortable back, with the heel of her boot balanced on her father-in-law's most sensitive corn.

The driver having by this time tumbled off his perilous seat, and rung the door-bell twice without evoking any sign of life from within, looked appealingly toward his fares.

"What am I to do?" said he.

"Ring again," said Mrs. Horatio.

And the hackman rang again, this time with so much energy as to pull the whole bell-wire out, and precipitate himself backward on the pavement, like Hamlet at the first sight of his father's ghost, at which the little boys laughed engagingly, and a hat-box tumbled down from the Leaning Tower into the gutter, where it split open like an overripe nut, revealing Mr. Horatio Biggs' best black felt hat.

"Boys, boys, do set steady up there!" screamed Mrs. Biggs. "Look! There's some one coming at last. Is it Hiram? Or is it Elizabeth?"

It was neither one nor the other, as it happened, but a stout old woman in a flannel dressing-gown, carpet slippers, and a red nose.

"Mr. Biggs' folks to home?" shrilly inquired Mrs. Horatio, who had constituted herself spokeswoman for the party, without any formal appointment.

"Oh, yes," answered the old woman, in a snuffy, confidential sort of tone, "they're to hum. But praps the children hadn't better come in."

By this time the hackman had opened the door of the vehicle and the tide of Biggses had begun to flow out on the pavement. But Mrs. Luke stopped abruptly on the carriage step, with her father-in-law's bronzed visage peeping over her shoulder.

"Not come in!" said she. "Why, we're their relations—come to visit 'em."

"Not but what they're a deal better, and the doctor says there ain't no more danger of contagion," reassuringly added the old woman.

"Contagion!" echoed the Biggs family.

"Hain't you heard?" said the old woman, with the solid satisfaction which old women generally evince in communicating any startling piece of information. "Well, it ain't no secret in the neighborhood, especially as people ain't best pleased with the board of health's conclusion to insulate 'em here instead of sendin' 'em to hospital. They've every one of 'em had the smallpox. And that's the reason the store is shut up. I'm here to nurse 'em. I ain't afraid of the smallpox, bein' as I've had it a'ready."

(Which was a self-evident fact to any one who looked upon her broad and smiling countenance.)

"Bless me!" said Mrs. Luke, promptly retreating into the hack. "Very thoughtless of Hiram's folks not to let us know. Mother! Josepha! Harriet Ann! come in at once. Pick up the hat-box. Tell the man to drive back to the ferry as fast as he can. Praps we'll be able to catch the 4 o'clock train back to Biggsville."

"I didn't know," suggested the old woman, rather disappointed at this sudden withdrawal of the invading forces, "but you might have come to help nurse 'em."

"Nothing of the sort," Mrs. Horatio answered, as, forcing herself into the already overfull hack, she slammed the door with an emphatic bang, and shouted to the driver to "Go on!"

"The—smallpox!" groaned Mrs. Biggs senior. "And not one of the children has been vaccinated!"

"We'd better stop at the nearest drug store and have it done at once," said Mrs. Luke, breathlessly.

"It'll be dreadful expensive," said Mrs. Horatio.

"But it'll be cheaper than having the smallpox," argued Mrs. Biggs senior.

So, after this important sanitary ceremonial, during which the Biggs boys bawled as if they were being flayed alive, the family returned, without loss of time, to Biggsville.

And Hiram's folks did not have the pleasure, then or ever, of entertaining their relations. In fact, they never dreamed how near they had been to that happiness. The Biggses declared over and over again that they never should forgive their city relations, but as Hiram's folks did not know it, they were saved from any overwhelming pang of conscience. They wrote a letter to the board of health, reproaching them bitterly with the bad management of the varioloid case in Thirteenth avenue, but they never got any answer from that august body. In short, the Biggs family were very angry, but they would probably have been angrier still if they had known with what fortitude Hiram's folks endured the deprivation of their society.

—Herper's Bazar.

PROGRESS.

Steadily, steadily, step by step
Up the venturesome builders go;
Carefully placing stones on stone—
Thus the loftiest temples grow.

Patiently, patiently, day by day,
The artist toils at his task away;
Touching it here and tinting it there,
Giving it ever with infinite care
A line more soft or a hue more fair;
Till, little by little, the picture grows,
And at last the cold, dull canvas glows—
With life and beauty, and forms of grace
That evermore in the world have place.

Thus with the poet—hour by hour
He listens to catch the fairy chimes
That ring in his soul, then, with magic power
He weaves their melody into his rhymes.
Slowly, carefully, word by word,
Line by line, and thought by thought,
He fashions the golden tissues of song—
And thus are immortal anthems wrought.

Every wise observer knows—
Every watchful gazer sees—
Nothing grand or beautiful grows,
Save by gradual, slow degrees;
Ye who toil with a purpose high
And fondly the proud result await,
Murmur not as the hours go by,
That the season is long—the harvest is late.

Remember that brotherhood, strong and true,
Builders and artists, and bards sublime,
Who lived in the past and worked like you,
Worked and waited a wearisome time—
Dark and cheerless and long their night,
Yet they patiently toiled at the task began
Till, lo! thro' the clouds broke that morning light
Which shines on the soul when success is won
—The Quiver.

HUMOROUS.

Landlord—"We're so crowded, I'm sorry to say, that you two gentlemen will have to sleep in the same bed with another guest." Travelers—"Oh, no, we can't do that; we're Grangers, and don't want any middle man."—*Courier-Journal*.

A young lady was recently asked by her gallant what she considered the height of impudence. Looking archly at him, she said: "Spark a girl for three solid hours and never offer to kiss her." He is not so impudent now. —*Wheeling Journal*.

A Salida (Mo.) woman won \$20 on a bet that she could chop a cord of wood sooner than a certain man. She would have lost her wager, however, if there had been in that vicinity a back-yard fence with another woman leaning over it. —*New York Commercial*.

Enthusiastic professor of physics, discussing the organic and inorganic kingdoms—"Now, if I should shut my eyes—so—and drop my head—so—and should not move, you would say I was a clod. But I move, I leap, I run; then what would you call me?" Voice from the rear—"A clod-hopper!" Class is dismissed.

Wonder has often been expressed that women have adopted the custom of carrying their purses in their hands. Why they do so has just been revealed in the reply a Philadelphia woman made her husband when he propounded to her the question, "Oh," said she, "it is so light that I am afraid it might jump out of my pocket."

A New York paper prints a picture of "the late ex-King Cocobau, of Fiji, and his suite." We infer that the tailor bills of Mr. Cocobau and suite seldom amount to over \$15 a year, and we shouldn't advise any of our readers to go to Fiji and open a ready-made clothing establishment, unless they want to starve to death. —*Norristown Herald*.

Prior to the reform act of 1857 the Catholic church owned \$150,000,000 worth of property in Mexico. That act confiscated the whole to the state, cathedrals and all, suppressed all religious societies, prohibited parades and public demonstrations of every kind; even the ringing of church bells was regulated by law. Nevertheless there are almost 400 churches in the republic, and nowhere else is the Catholic church stronger.

A bridge across the Firth-of-Forth is projected, and indeed is already under way, which, if finished, will be one of the most remarkable bridges in the world. The main girder will be within a few feet of a mile in length and will rest upon round cylindrical piers, each of which will weigh 16,000 tons. It will, of course, be high enough for all vessels to pass underneath and about 42,000 tons of steel will be required in its construction. The estimated cost will be \$7,500,000.