

# The Mountain Banner

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**A FIRESIDE BALLAD.**  
BY ROBERT H. HALL.  
Away down East, where mountain hills  
Are through the hollows blown,  
Where cattle browse upon the hills  
When summer winds are blown;  
There in the moonlight winter nights  
The world puts on its splendor,  
When young folks go to singin' school  
An' git so kind o' tender;  
Where village gossips hear an' tell  
Their kind of harmless slander,  
Where lived blue-eyed Melstabel  
An' honest young Philander.  
Melstabel was jest ez sweet  
An' fair ez summer weather;  
She had the sweetest teeth  
That ever trod in leather.  
An' then those mild, soft eyes o' hers—  
By elder wren's no clearer—  
An' the Phlander's stage burn  
When ever he got near her.  
After he was tall an' thin,  
Kind o' slender Phlander,  
She had a sort o' golden chain,  
His hair was long an' yellow.  
An' his go-to-meetin' dress,  
A velvet collar sportin',  
He went down cross-lane Sunday nights,  
The Deacon Spencer, courtin'.  
There down he sat afore the fire,  
A Phlander's lookin',  
He praised the Deacon's sheep an' cows,  
He praised her mother's cookin'.  
He talked all round the tender plant,  
But somehow, couldn't do it;  
The words got kind o' out o' joint,  
An' he could git through it.  
Somebody o'clock one Sunday night,  
An' he had the wren's warbin',  
The old folks had gone off to bed,  
The Deacon, he was snorin'.  
An' the time-worn round the light  
The kind o' soft an' rosy,  
The old folks still was drawn  
By the fireplace cozy.  
Melstabel got on one end,  
An' Philander he got by her,  
With the old folks in his hand,  
An' he took 'em to the fire.  
The Deacon to tell her how he felt,  
He was in a flutter;  
He said he jest rolled down his face,  
The drops o' melted butter.  
There they sat an' talked about  
The moonshine an' the weather,  
An' he had a kind o' hitchin' up,  
Until they hitched together.  
The Deacon sneezed away in bed,  
An' Philander he grew bolder;  
He laid his arm around her head,  
An' he laid it on his shoulder.  
An' when she lifted up her eyes  
An' looked right into his,  
He looked right into hers,  
An' his mouth had a smile.  
Melstabel an' Philander's hearts  
Were linked together,  
Some speech whispered in his ear:  
"Just do it now or never!"  
She said: "My dear Melstabel,  
My house an' home are waitin';  
An' ain't it gettin' to be time  
That you an' I were ma'ried?"  
An' then she said, jest loud enough  
For him to understand her,  
"If you kin be content with me,  
I guess it is, Philander!"  
The Deacon woke up from his dreams,  
An' he said: "There's somethin' brewin'!"  
He peeked out through the bedroom door  
To see what they were doin'.  
An' when he saw 'em sittin' there,  
He lectured 'em in a stern,  
An' almost snickered right out loud—  
He tickled him all over.  
He nudged his wife an' told her, too,  
An' may I how it did please her,  
An' then they talked 'emselves to sleep,  
An' snored away like Deeser.  
The Deacon sot there all night long;  
He didn't think o' goin'  
Till, when the day began to dawn,  
He heard the roosters crowin'.  
An' when he started over home  
Alone across the hollow,  
He had a talkin' to himself,  
An' fumbled with his collar.  
She said: "That never was a chap  
That did the brown slicker!"  
An' then he got himself a slap,  
An' may I how he did snicker.  
An' now blue-eyed Melstabel  
Is married to Philander,  
An' village gossips tell  
That he's weddin' grander.  
The peaceful, moonlight winter nights  
Have not yet lost their splendor;  
The young folks go to singin' school  
An' still get kind o' tender.  
Away down East, where mountain hills  
Are through the hollows blown,  
Where cattle browse upon the hills  
When summer winds are blown.  
—From Poems of the Farm and Fireside.

And sundry were the ejaculations of the knight—"How beautiful!" though whether they were applied to the scenery or his companion must still remain an open question. Some six months elapsed, and our scene now opens in the loveliest month of the year—warm, glowing, sunny June. It was the eve of the 1st of June, and the knight and the "fair lady" were taking their accustomed walk. The moonlight lay bright upon the river, and the water trembled beneath it like timid lips beneath the first kiss.  
A nightingale began to sing in the valley, which had derived its name from the inimitable songster, and another answered it from an adjacent grove. It was a night in which one not only loves, but is beloved, in which one not only longs for blessedness, but will be blessed. The knight drew the "lady" closer to his side, and more compressed was the pressure on her delicately rounded arm as he poured his vows of affection and unalterable love into her willing ear. His advances were not discouraged, for the happy pair returned to the uncle, who doubtless said, in the language of old stage comedy gentlemen, "Take her, you dog, take her, though you don't deserve her."  
Time rolled on; four times had the seasons changed, but no change had taken place in the relative positions of Celia and her knight. They were still affianced, but alas, for the fickleness of woman! such was not long to continue the case. A Mr. D—, who in early life had exchanged the quiet and romantic scenery of his native village for the busy, bustling scenes of Manchester, returned to Acon for the purpose of visiting his parents, and in the course of his sojourn was introduced to our fair old-fashioned heroine. Verily, if Cupid shot the dart, he has much to answer for; but certain it is that the young linen-draper created, unwittingly, an interest in the breast of the lady far deeper than that she felt for her former lover! But, alas! the flame was not mutual.  
Whether Mr. D— was aware of the engagement subsisting between Mrs. Celia and her knight, or whether his affections were of a platonic rather than ardent caste, is uncertain; but, nevertheless, when his leave of absence expired, he took leave of the damsel with all conceivable coolness and unconcern, and deserted the charming Celia for calicoes and counter-jumping. Poor girl! she shook to her susceptible affections was insupportable. She pined and withered, walked about the house with an absent, distracted, melancholy air, took to singing doleful ditties, commencing with "Sweet Blighted Lily," and, in short, was fast becoming a prey to "a lean and yellow melancholy."  
If vain the assiduous knight, who little suspected the cause of his fair one's misery, redoubled his attentions. In vain he entreated her to put a termination to his doubts and fears, and crown his happiness by becoming Mrs. K—, No; the image of her knight was supplanted in her faithful heart by her dear, her darling Mr. D—; and finally, when she became of age, she quietly sent a letter to the young gentleman at Manchester, avowing her predilection for him, and offering herself for his acceptance, "for better, for worse," as the case might be. As soon as the Manchester man received the letter he at once cut the calico trade, and came as fast as the wings of love and an express train could bring him to throw himself at the lady's feet. Fortune was favorable.  
The uncle and guardian of the lady were temporarily absent; and (we blush to say it) the faithless Celia and her linen-draper lover were united in the indissoluble bonds of holy matrimony. Swiftly passed the hours, and they awakened from their "dream of young love." The Manchester man explained to his sorrowing lady that circumstances compelled him to return to that city, and that it would be highly inconvenient for him to take her with him just then. Wiping away her tears with his snowy cambric handkerchief (a choice sample of a recent consignment), he besought her for a short time to keep their marriage secret; and, assuring her of fidelity to their pledged vows, said he should shortly return and claim her as his bride. They parted. Mr. D— returned to his business; and the devoted knight was still constant in his visits, and thus ends the second chapter of this eventful history.

Two days only had passed since the departure of Mr. D—, but in that brief interval the train had been laid to the mine which was to explode beneath the feet of the unsuspecting Celia. The uncle was informed of his niece's secret marriage, and while she was walking in the valley we have before spoken of, musing on her absent husband, and meditating what she should say to her present lover (for her knight accompanied her in her walk), he was preparing to hurl anathemas on her head on her return. The sun had sunk below the horizon, and the silvery beams of the moon were shining on the tops of the tall trees, when the pair bent their steps homeward.  
The hour, the scene, all concurred in reminding the knight of the day when his lady love first, blushing, owned she loved him, and again he passionately entreated her to name "the day, the eventful day," which should turn gloom into gladness, and make his heart leap with hilarious joy. Instead of informing him of what had taken place, she owned his passion was returned, and he accompanied her to her residence, elate with hope at the imagined prospect of his desires being gratified by the bestowal of her hand and fortune. Judge of his astonishment, however, when, on arriving at the door, an outburst of fury on the part of the uncle too soon revealed to him the terrible truth.  
The revulsion of feeling was too great; he was distracted; he tore his hair; and, with a wild gaze on the transfixed Celia, he rushed from the house. Sleep was out of the question; and, like Adam, he still lingered around his lost paradise. Meantime our heroine had to endure the reproaches of her increased guardian, who even proceeded to personal violence; and in the dead of night she pecked up her worldly goods, not forgetting the £1,000, determined on the first blush of morn to be "off and away."  
She carried her determination into effect, and at "early dawn" left the house and proceeded on her road to Bristol. She had not taken many steps, when, to her surprise, she met the disconsolate knight who had so hurriedly "cut his stick" the previous evening, looking a perfect picture of woe-begone wretchedness. Who shall fathom the heart of woman!—her partiality for him revived, she longed to console the wretched wanderer, and to his frantic entreaties she replied, in accents sweet, "My own dear knight, I am afraid I have been a little fool. Can you forgive your poor, unhappy, wretched Celia?" Her overburdened heart could say no more; she swooned, and was caught in the arms of her faithful knight, who, with many a fond, endearing expression and sundry pressings to his bosom, recalled her to life.  
"What shall we do?" murmured the unhappy girl. "Cut and run," suggested her lover, though not, perhaps, in these very forcible words. Something, indeed, he said about flying with him in a state of felicity, declaring she could not think of doing such a thing, and, finally,  
Whispering, "I'll never consent!" consented.  
They fled, carrying with them the £1,000 sterling, and the disconsolate husband does not know where to find either the fugitive lovers or the winged riches. Moreover, the clandestinely contracted alliance being displeasing to the lady's friends, they will not assist her liege lord and master in discovering her whereabouts.

**TALL LYNX.**  
Four Kentucky printers met one day over a free lunch, and one began boasting about having gained a prize at a type-setting competition. He modestly put the figure at 2,000 ems per hour. "Wal, that's a mighty poor show, I reckon," said No. 2, contemptuously. "I could stick type together quicker than that with my eyes shut—about 5,000 ems is what I can do." No. 3: "Five thousand ems an hour! Wal, I guess, where I last slung type there was a man who gobbled up copy so fast that he kept a small boy going all day running backwards and forwards for fresh supplies. You've seen a buggy wheel spin round with a fast-trotting cob in front of it, when the spokes looked like streaks of cold lightning? Wal, when that man was setting type, he moved so fast that you could never tell what he was like. He was a cloud of mist. In one day that man set up—" No. 4, who had not hitherto spoken, here struck in: "You really don't know what that man was like?" "No; we worked alongside each other five months, and during that time I never once got a good look at his face, and then I had to send in my checks, for the wind caused by his rapid movements gave me such dreadful rheumatism that I was never well for two days together." "You're quite sure you would not know that man again?" continued No. 4, calmly fixing his eyes upon the narrator. "No, I've just told you." "Wal, I know what you've been telling us is a fact, for I'm that man!"  
A LITTLE girl of five or six summers, stopping with her parents at one of the fashionable hotels at Saratoga Springs, was invited at dinner to take some wine as it was passed round. She declined. "Why do you not take wine with your dinner, Minnie?" asked a gentleman who sat near her. "Taise I doesn't like it." "But take a little, then, my child, for your stomach's sake," he urged. "I ain't dot no tommyk's sake," indignantly responded the little miss, in the most emphatic manner.  
TUPPER, the "Proverbial Philosopher," and the butt of the paragonian both hemispheres, is said as a man to be very jovial, kind-hearted and a good fellow generally, but as a poet ludicrously conceited.

**A SUCCESSFUL SPY.**  
In March, 1865, I was assistant enrolling officer of Mobile county, my chief being Maj. H. G. Humphries. One morning the Major handed me a bundle of papers, and, pointing to a stalwart-looking soldier, dressed in the uniform of a Confederate sergeant, said: "Examine these papers and give him what he requires." He added: "If I had a thousand such men I could whip a brigade of Yankees." The Major was a very impulsive but conscientious man. I found the papers to be regular; they had been through the headquarters officers and were indorsed "correct." The enrolling officer was directed to furnish Sergt. Burke with a horse and subsistence. His papers represented him to be Sergt. Burke, of the Army of East Tennessee, and he was directed to proceed to Mobile and gather up all men from that army, absent without leave, and return them to their commands. A desk and writing materials were furnished him, as was a horse. He was soon engaged in writing. After a day or two he would absent himself, and on several occasions, would not return for many hours, and always on his return would write a great deal. When asked what he had done he would always have a probable story to tell of being on the track of a number of deserters, and, strange to say, he did forward several batches of men to their commands. He appeared to be very zealous in the Confederate cause, and one day remarked that we ought to fight under the black flag and shoot every Federal found within our lines. The Major was much of his opinion, but I was not, and Burke thought I was very lukewarm in the cause. In all of his actions he was a Confederate of the most bitter kind, and of course was not suspected of being anything else. This went on for several weeks, Burke going away in the morning, and when he returned, he would go to his desk and write a mass of papers, apparently taking his notes from a book which he always carried.  
Early in April Mobile was surrendered and Gen. Canby took possession. Burke left two days previous to the surrender, and we supposed he had gone to his command. The day after the surrender I was walking on Royal street, near Gen. Canby's headquarters, when I was halted by a Federal soldier, who called me by name. I looked at him with surprise and did not recognize him until he said: "Lieutenant, don't you know me?" I then saw that it was Sergt. Burke, and remarked: "What does this mean, this uniform?" He replied: "You now know what I have been at the past few weeks." "Yes," I said, "a spy." He smiled and said: "Lieutenant, if you want protection or aid you will get it by reporting to Gen. Canby. I made a list of deserving citizens for his use, and your name heads the list. Good-by." I have not seen Burke since, nor have I any knowledge of what became of him. Burke was a sharp, intelligent, American Irishman, and I now have reason to believe that he furnished Farragut with a great deal of valuable information.—G. A. Arnold, in Philadelphia Times.

**HE STOOD THE TEST FOR A FREE PASS.**  
A young man of amiable manners presented himself at the box-office of a variety show at Petaluma, and requested a press pass.  
"You don't claim to be a journalist, do you?" asked the manager, glancing suspiciously at the good clothes and innocent expression of the applicant.  
"Yes I do, though; I'm on the *Pleasant Snapper*."  
"Hum! What is your department?" growled the manager.  
"I do the 'Answers to Correspondents,'" asserted the youth.  
"Do, eh? Let me see: What was the fastest mile ever skated backward for money in the United States?"  
"That question is always signed 'Nimrod,'" said the young man, promptly, "and the answer is, 'Died in Brazil, 1446.'"  
"Correct," said the manager. "When was Cleopatra hung?"  
"Trim with deep ruching and bake before a quick fire."  
"Did Oliver Cromwell have a blue wart on his chin?"  
"B takes the trick, of course."  
"Was Queen Elizabeth bandy-legged, or only banded in one leg? and how do you take inkstains out of marble?"  
"Inquire at any hardware store."  
"Patagonia was discovered by Benjamin Franklin in 1293."  
"That settles it," said the manager promptly shelling out a private-box check; "I see you've got 'em all by heart. Pass right in."—San Francisco Post.

**ORAN OF ALECK STEPHENS' STORIES** after coming in a handsome winner at a game of whist: There was a Jew in Georgia who had a difficulty with a man who had injured him. The Jew got the man down and continued the pummeling. A bystander pleaded for the under man, and said: "Don't gouge a man when he is down." The Jew replied: "Dat ish de time to gouge a man when he ish down."  
**THE FRIENDLESS PRINTERS.**  
The Washington correspondent of the New York Evening Post vouches for the truth of the following story: A great many years ago, before the present Government Printing Office was established, three printers engaged on Government work who were fast friends and constant associates. They neither had nor cared to have other acquaintances. One day, one of the three fell sick and died. Then the question was who would perform the usual rites of friendship for the dead. Nobody outside took any interest in the matter, so that the two friends were obliged to care for the body themselves. Now, all these printers were very fond of liquor, and, though they were never to be seen in public bar-rooms, had many a bout by themselves in a quiet nook.  
The two remaining friends then sat up with the corpse, and to while away the time brought their pack of cards and bottle for company. Euchre was the game and they played for a stake, the winner to drink on scoring the game, and the loser to stay dry. The luck ran one-sided. Seated on either side of the corpse, with the coffin between them as a table, the players played and recounted the virtues of their dead friend. But the one who never won was getting more and more thirsty. The cards had run steadily against him, and not a drop of liquor had passed his lips. Finally the luck changed, and, slapping down the right bower on the coffin, he exclaimed: "There, now it's my turn!" With a hasty motion he reached for the bottle, but at that instant consternation filled the breast of both friends as the supposed corpse rose up and said, "Not a drop till I've had mine." With a scream of horror the two friends jumped up and rushed, one to the door and the other to the window. The latter leaped to the ground in his terror and broke a leg, the other gained the street without misadventure and disappeared.  
Years have elapsed. Both the watchmen have died, but the friend who was supposed to be dead still lives, an eccentric, aged man, who is now a compositor in the Government printing house.  
**THE MAN ON THE BICYCLE.**  
The man on the bicycle is invariably a silent man—a preoccupied man—a man upon whose face is written an utter indifference of all things met with on his bright, sunny way. He may attract and rivet and clinch the curious attention of hundreds, but he is never attracted to anything or anybody. It is a part of his strange fate to appear simply an automatic section of his machine. He cannot even tell why he works his legs in that peculiar way; indeed, for the most part, he seems totally oblivious of the fact that he has a pair of legs to work at all, and yet the spasmodic undulations of his knees will command at once the attentive admiration of every lowly pedestrian he passes in the crowded street. The man on the bicycle seems always to be going somewhere a very great number of miles from here. Evidently he has not hoisted himself up there astride of that great spindle-shanked wheel either for the mere fun of the thing or to accent his beauty and grace of figure before the multitude. He is there, for a purpose, rest assured, however inscrutable a mystery it may seem to us. It is enough for us to recognize it, his profound abstraction and melancholy bearing that he knows the goal of his ambition and will arrive there in proper time, no fear. Whatever emotions may be surging at his heart, whatever tempestuous, yearning at riot in the soul within, the stolid face goes glimmering by us, betraying nothing but the grave content of one whose clear convictions have never failed him yet. He knows his purpose and his destination. That is enough for us.—Indianapolis Journal.

**THE JILT.**  
In the pleasant village of Acon, situated near the city, on the Somersetshire side of the Avon, resided, some two years since and for aught we know reside there still, an elderly gentleman whose household affairs were superintended by perfect paragon of a niece—a lovely and accomplished young lady, just emerging from her teens, and graced with that most appreciated of all charms in this unromantic age, the possession of a small fortune. On her arriving at the age of 21, she was enticed to the sum of £1,000. Need it be said that, with these attractions, numerous were the enamored swains sighing at the feet of the fair Celia, who, however, turned a deaf ear to their solicitations, and restricted her affections to a favorite kitten and a "love of a spaniel," till at length a stalwart knight, sturdy and bold, entered the lists, and soon distanced all competitors for the hand of our heroine and her £1,000.  
Matters progressed favorably, and, after a time, the fair Celia began to consider the eyes of her knight better worth looking into and his countenance more attractive than that of her juvenile grins, and even the pet, Flora, was neglected. Numerous were their walks,

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**PLEASANTRIES.**  
PURCHASERS of "rare old china" are often stuck-up people.  
BLACKSMITHS are rarely good penmen, and yet they are always forging.—Boston Courier.  
THE male idiot now arranges his hair in the water wares plastered down on his forehead.—Harrisburg Telegraph.  
"MAMMA, what are twins made for?" asked a little girl the other day. Her precocious elder brother replied: "So that cannibals may eat philopenas."  
WHEN Rabelais was on his death-bed, a consultation of physicians was called. "Dear gentlemen," said the wit to the doctors, raising his languid head, "let me die a natural death."  
"WHY, sir," said a client to his lawyer, "you are writing my bill on very rough paper." "Never mind," was the lawyer's reply, "it will have to be filed before it comes into court."  
"MAMMA," said a 5-year-old boy, the other day, "I wish you wouldn't leave me to take care of baby again. He was so bad I had to eat all the sponge cake and two jars of raspberry jam to amuse him."  
SAID a parent to his little son, who had committed some act of indiscretion: "Do you know that I am going to whip you?" "Yes," said the boy, "I suppose you are, because you are bigger than I am!"  
LADIES who wear bangs may profit by a perusal of this:  
On the bang! The terrible bang!  
How over the forehead they dangle and hang;  
Or, plastered with paste, with molasses and grease,  
How the curlycles stick like a door-mat's increase!  
If God made the forehead a temple of thought,  
The devil made bangs to set it at naught.  
THE following letter was received by an undertaker from an afflicted widow:  
"Sur-my waf is ded and winks to be berried to-morrow at Womer kloak. U nose waire to dig the hole—by the siad of two other wafs—let it be deep."  
"THIS ain't a menagerie," sharply observed an irascible deacon to a man who was trying to force a passage through a crowd at a church doorway. "No, I presume not," returned the stranger, "or they wouldn't leave any of the animals to block up the entrance."  
AN exchange says: "Of the 600 young ladies attending the Elmira Female College no two can agree as to what they would do in case they saw a bear. Now, this is a libel on the young ladies, for, were he well dressed and respectable, at least three-fourths of them would wait with curious impatience to see if he proposed to hug them."  
WILLIAM PETERS, of Arkansas, sat himself down on the steps of a country church and said there should be no preaching there that Sunday. After William had received a bullet in the leg he vacated, and the services were begun. The text was: "Why do the heathen rage?"  
BURY, when the bar (the tavern bar), That bar to stay boys!  
If you would keep from all that sordid, Use only bar of soap.  
'Tis but a step from bar first named Unto the prisoner's bar;  
'Tis the sand bar in life's stream Where many wrecked are.  
'Tis the bar where you'll be sharked, Clean as the barber's shave, Of money, honor, health and peace— Oh, bah! be no bar slave.  
—Boston Transcript.  
**INVENTORS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.**  
Americans have earned a reputation for the number if not for the caliber of their inventions. Perhaps their success is as much due to the prevailing disposition to believe in an alleged discovery and to give it a trial. In England an inventor who proclaims his invention is looked upon like a clucking hen who has laid her egg. Doubtless there are occasions when he is over noisy and un-conscientious. Inventors have had more grievances and have appraised the world of them more than any other class of men. Here they are regarded as bores; in America they are entertaining, and everybody listens to them. That is partly why America offers a better field for the propagation of discovery. But Mr. Chamberlain trod justly, as we believe, on one of our favorite forms of national self-depreciation when he denied that the Americans surpassed by in the more solid and striking of the inventions which the world's registry of sise records.—London Times.  
**INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF TOBACCO.**  
An intermission of the beating of heart and pulse is one of the results of tobacco smoking. It is enough, in certain cases, to suspend or at least reduce the use of tobacco in smoking to see the irregularity in the functions of the heart disappear entirely or diminish. Young people who smoke show generally a sluggishness of intelligence and a strong or less-pronounced taste for strong drinks. In very young persons who cease to smoke and who are not affected by any organic lesion, the disorders of the economy which have just been mentioned disappear, often very quickly and almost always without leaving any trace.  
WHEN the Pilgrims first landed they fell on their knees, after which they fell on the aborigines.