

The Torch-Light.

DAVIS & ROBINSON, Editors and Proprietors.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE, THAT GIVES IT ALL ITS FLAVOR.

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NO. 24.

Two Little Feet Have Strayed.

From out our cosy fireside,
Two little feet have strayed,
And a lonely little cottage
Their vacancy have made.
To-night I'm sad and lonely;
Oh! that they would come to me,
And fill our broken circle
Just as it need to be!

I do not hear their patter
Upon the kitchen floor,
I do not meet the welcome
I used to, at the door.
In our little home how faintly
Burns the tapers to-night,
For little feet have wandered,
And with them, gone the light.

Hark! I seem to hear them
Out at the cottage gate;
Will they ever wander back again,
Even now so late?
No; I know it cannot be,
'Tis but the night wind's sigh,
Telling me that sweetest flowers
Bloom only to die.

THREE BRAVE MEN.

A NOVEL ROMANCE.

Pretty Barbara Ferros would not marry. Her mother was in consternation.

"Why are you so stubborn Barbara?" she asked. "You have plenty of lovers."

"But they do not suit," said Barbara, coolly tying back her curls before the mirror.

"Why not?"

"I want to marry a man who is brave, equal to any emergency. If I give up my liberty, I want it taken care of!"

"Silly child! what is the matter with big Barney the blacksmith?"

"He is big, but I never heard that he was brave."

"And you never heard that he was not. What is the matter with Ernest, the gunsmith?"

"He is placid as goat's milk."

"That is no sign that he is a coward. There is little Fritz, the tanner; he is quarrelsome enough for you, surely!"

"He is no bigger than my thumb. It is little good he can do, if the house was set upon by robbers."

"It is not always strength that wins a fight; it takes brains as well as brawn. Come, now, Barbara, give these young fellows a fair trial."

Barbara turned her face before the mirror, letting down one raven tress and looping up another.

"I will, mother," she said at last.

That evening, Earnest, the gunsmith, knocked at the door.

"You sent for me, Barbara?" he said going to the girl, who stood upon the hearth coquettishly warming one pretty foot and then the other.

"Yes, Ernest," she replied. "I've been thinking on what you said the other night, when you were here."

"Well, Barbara?"

Ernest spoke quietly, but his dark blue eyes flashed, and he looked at her intently.

"I want to test you."

"How?"

"I want to see if you dare do a very disagreeable thing."

"What is it?"

"There is an old coffin up stairs. It smells mouldy. They say Redmond, the murderer, was buried in it, but the devil came for his body and left the coffin empty at the end of a week; and it was finally taken from the tomb. It is up stairs in the room grandfather died in, and they say grandfather does not rest easy in his grave for some reasons, though that I know nothing about. Dare you make that coffin your bed to-night?"

Ernest laughed.

"Is that all? I will do that and sleep soundly. Why, pretty one,

did you think I had weak nerves? Your nerves will have good proof if you undertake to do it. Remember no one sleeps in that wing of the house."

"I shall sleep the sounder."

"Good night, then. I will send you a lad to show you the chamber. If you stay till morning," said imperious Miss Barbara, with a nod of her pretty head, "I'll marry you."

"You vow it?"

Ernest turned straight away and followed the lad in waiting through dim rooms and passages, up echoing stairs, along narrow damp ways, where rats scuttled before to a low chamber. The lad looked pale and scared, and evidently wanted to hurry away, but Ernest made him wait until he took a survey by the aid of his lamp. It was very large and full of recesses which had been barred across. He remembered that old grand-sire Ferros had been insane several years before his death, so that this precaution had been necessary for the safety of himself and others. In the centre of the room stood a coffin, beside it was placed a chair. The room was otherwise perfectly empty.

Ernest stretched himself out in the coffin.

"Be kind enough to tell Miss Barbara it is a very good fit," he said.

The lad went out and shut the door, leaving the young gunsmith alone in the dark.

Meanwhile, Barbara was talking with the big blacksmith in the sitting room.

"Barney," said she pulling her hand away from his grasp, when he would have kissed her, "I've a test to put you to before I give you any answer. There is a corpse lying in the chamber where my grand-sire died, in the untenanted wing of the house. If you dare sit with it all night and let nothing drive you from your post, you will not ask me again in vain?"

"You'll give me a light a bottle of wine and a book to read?"

"Nothing."

"Are these all the conditions you offer me, Barbara?"

"All. And if you are frightened, you need never look me in the face again."

So Barney was conducted to his post by the lad, who had been instructed into the secret, and whose involuntary start at Ernest's placid face as he lay in the coffin was attributed by Barney to the natural awe of a corpse. He took his seat and the boy left him alone in the darkness, the rats and the coffin.

Soon after young Fritz, the tanner arrived, flattered and hopeful from the fact that Barbara had sent for him.

"Have you changed your mind, Barbara?" he asked.

"No; and I shall not until I know that you can do a really brave thing."

"What shall it be? I swear to satisfy you, Barbara."

"I have a proposal to make to you. My plan requires skill as well as courage."

"Tell me!"

"Well, in this house there is a man watching a corpse. He is sworn not to leave his post till morning. If you can make him do it, I shall be satisfied that you are as smart and as brave as I require a husband to be."

"Why nothing is so easy!" exclaimed Fritz. "I can scare him away. Furnish me with a sheet, show me the room and go to your rest, Barbara. You shall find me at the post in the morning."

Barbara did as required and saw the tanner step lightly away to his task. It was then nearly twelve

o'clock, and she sought her own chamber.

Barney had been sitting at his vigil and so far all had been well. The night seemed very long, for he had no means of counting the time. At times a thrill went through him, for it seemed as if he could hear a low suppressed breathing not far away; persuaded himself that it was the wind blowing through the crevices of the old house. Still it was very lonely and not at all cheerful.

The face in the coffin gleamed white still. The rats squeaked as if there was a famine upon them and they smelled the dead flesh. The thought made him shudder. He got up and walked about, but something made a slight noise behind him, and he put his chair with his back against the wall, and sat down again. He had been at work all day, and at last grew sleepy. Finally he nodded and snored.

Suddenly it seemed as if somebody had touched him. He awoke with a start, and saw nobody near, though in the centre of the room stood a white figure.

"Curse you, get out of this!" he exclaimed in affright using the first words that came to his tongue.

The figure held out its right arm and slowly approached him. He started to his feet. The spectre came nearer, pressing him into the corner.

"The mischief take you!" cried Barney in his extremity.

Involuntarily he stepped back; still the figure advanced, coming nearer and nearer as if to take him in a ghostly embrace. The hair started up on Barney's head. He grew desperate, and just as the gleaming arm would have touched him, he fell on the ghost like a whirlwind, tearing the sheet, thumping, pounding, beating and kicking more and more enraged at the resistance he met, which told him the truth.

As the readers know, he was big and Fritz was little; and while he was pummelling the little fellow terribly, and Fritz was trying to get a lunge at Barney's stomach, to take the wind out of him, both kicking and plunging like horses, they were petrified by hearing a voice cry:

"Take one of your size big Barney!"

Looking around they saw the corpse sitting up in his coffin.— This was too much. They released each other and sprang for the door. They never knew how they got out; but they got home in hot haste, panting like stags.

It was Barbara herself who came and opened the door next morning.

"It's very early; one more little nap," said he, "one more little nap," turning over in his coffin.

So she married him, and though she sent Fritz and Barney invitations to the wedding they did not appear. If they discovered the trick they kept the knowledge to themselves, and never willingly faced Barbara's laughing eyes.

Singular Will.

A wealthy gentleman in New York has added a codicil to his will ordering that after his death his body shall be injected with petroleum, placed in a metallic coffin and then deposited in one of the retorts of the Manhattan Gas Company's works. If afterwards no one wishes to inter his ashes they are to be delivered to the Central Park Commissioners, to be used as fertilizing material on one of the flower beds near the music stand.

There is nothing like "home rule" and a hickory stick.

How old Hickory got his Name.

A correspondent of the Jackson (Miss.) News, tells how Gen. Jackson got his title of Old Hickory. He says he got the story from Capt. William Allen, a near neighbor of the General, and who messed with him during the Creek war. During the campaign the soldiers were moving rapidly to surprise the Indians, and were without tents. A cold March rain came on, mingled with sleet, which lasted several days. Gen. Jackson got a severe cold, but did not complain as he tried to sleep in a muddy bottom among his half-frozen soldiers. Capt. Allen and his brother John cut down a stout hickory tree, peeled off the bark, and made a covering for the General, who was with difficulty persuaded to crawl into it. The next morning a drunken citizen entered the camp, and seeing the tent kicked it over. As Jackson crawled from the ruins, the toper cried, "Hello, Old Hickory! come out of your bark, and jine us in a drink."

Danbury News.

The bells of Danbury is in mourning for a poodle departed this life yesterday for Sausage Land. It was the ugliest beast we ever itched to kick and yet we "loved her, loved her dog."

Don't throw any more old boots or hoop skirts in the street but hand them to your next door neighbor.

We enjoyed a hand-organ serenade for two mortal hours last Saturday afternoon. We fired our very soul at the fiend and even that shot missed him. The wretch did not cease until we flung a copy of the *The News* at him and this knocked him down—dead (shot).

Dumb pianos, for beginners are advertised in London. We want one of those things for the Danbury House.

If a stick of wood is too long for the stove, kick it a few times with your heel. Then take it out and saw it off.—*Danbury News.*

The Emperor's Heart.

When Napoleon the Great Died at St. Helena, an English physician took charge of his heart, depositing it in a silver basin filled with water. Two tapers burned near it, but the custodian left nervously anxious while watching it through the night, and did not sleep. In the silence of the midnight he heard a rustling sound, then a plunge into the water, and rebound on the floor—all occurring with the quickness of thought. He sprang to the floor from his bed to see an enormous rat dragging the precious relic to his hole! A moment and the heart which had been too vast in its ambition to be satisfied with the sovereignty of continental Europe, would have been more degraded than the dust of imperial Cæsar.

There was a great stir, says Punch, in our garden the other day. The potatoes were ready to jump out of their skins. The beets turned red to its very roots. The celery lost their heads, and the cabbage their hearts. The peas spilt their pods with excitement. The asparagus could with difficulty be kept in its bed. The parsley curled itself up in a corner. The cucumber alone maintained its habitual coolness. The cause of this commotion was the presence of a noted vegetarian. The potatoes never took their eyes off him.

If some men died and others did not, death would indeed be a most mortifying evil.

Stray Thoughts.

We are all hunters in the field of life. Some of us bring down our game; but the most of us end in a wild-goose chase.

Were it not for the clouds that darken us, there would be no rainbow in our lives.

When you read, read the best books; it costs you no more; and what you get will help to correct and build you up. A good book is like a voice from nature or from God. Do not confound this voice with the utterance of falsehood.

It is not in placing the words that the effect of the good writing consist; it is in the thought bringing its own word, that leaps to it like the particle to the magnet.

We are sinning when we think we are.

Perhaps the nearest good next to doing good to your "neighbor," is to benefit your enemy. But some people heap coals of fire on their enemy's head to scorch him, thus making use of a Christian precept to do evil.

Illness is the great slough into which the vices of the world drift and settle, to rise again in miasma.

It should not discourage us if our kindness is unacknowledged; as has its influence still.

We govern our passions; but in general we let the passion first have a trial.

Gardening on Shares.

A good story, and all the better in being true, is told of one of our citizens, who let a piece of ground to a man on shares. The man would hire the lot, but the owner, doubtful of getting any money of the tenant, proposed to let it upon the promise of receiving half the products. Occasionally during the summer he passed the spot and was pleased with the cultivation it was receiving, and with its goodly show of vegetables. Harvest time came and passed, and he heard nothing from his tenant, till, in response to a hint, the latter sent him one watermelon and three shriveled cucumbers. Indignant at this shabby treatment he called on the man and asked him what it meant. "Why, you see, squire," replied the tenant, "the pesky boys stole all your half but the melon and cucumbers."

Health from Flowers.

It is reported that an Italian professor has discovered that perfumes from flowers have a chemical effect on the atmosphere, converting its oxygen into ozone, and thus increasing its health-imparting power. As the result of his researches he states that essence of cherry, laurel, lavender, mint, juniper, melons, fennel and bergamot are among those which develop the largest quantities of ozone while anise and thyme develop it in a less degree. Flowers destitute of perfume have no such effect.

He very naturally recommends that dwellers in marshy localities and near places effected with animal emanations should surround their homes with a profusion of the most odoriferous flowers—a recommendation which the Creator, through their beauty and fragrance, addresses to the senses of sensible people.

Make use of your time if thou lovest eternity; know, yesterday cannot be recalled, to-morrow cannot be assured; to-day is only thine; which if thou procrastinate, thou lovest; which lost is lost forever; one to-day is worth two to-morrows.

No other living thing can go so slow as a boy on an errand.

The Stolen Kiss.

He kissed me, and I knew it was wrong
For he was neither kith nor kin;
I need no one do penance very long
For such a tiny little sin?
He pressed my hand that wasn't right;
Why will men have such wicked ways?
It wasn't for a minute—quite—
But in it there were days and days.
There's mischief in the moon I know;
I'm positive I saw her wink
When I requested him to go;
I meant it too—I almost think.
But after all, I'm not to blame;
He took the kiss. I do think
I'm quite without a sense of shame,
I wonder when he'll come again.

LIFE LENGTHENING.

Much is said about the degeneracy of our age. It is thought that we have lost the vigor and strength of our forefathers, and are growing weak and sickly. But statistics, carefully gathered, tell a very different story. The average size of Englishmen is larger than it was three centuries ago, for the armour worn by the knights of that time cannot be put on to-day, save by small men. The average duration of life is also longer. Accurate registers have been kept in Geneva since 1340. The average of life was then only twenty-two years and six months; it is now over forty years, or nearly double. In France four hundred years ago, the annual mortality in Paris was one in sixteen; now it is one in thirty-two which shows about the same ratio as in Geneva. In England two centuries ago, the annual mortality was one in thirty-three; now it is one in forty-two. It is pleasant to know that the world is improving, and that the vigor and health of our race are gaining steadily instead of declining.

Some students fixed up a ghost and placed it on the staircase of a Troy newspaper office the other night, and then retired and awaited developments. One of the editors came along and didn't get frightened. He disrobed it, and now wears a fifteen-dollar pair of pantaloons, a ten-dollar vest, a seven-dollar pair of boots and an eight-dollar hat, while one of the students goes about without a vest, and another roams around through the least frequented streets wearing a very ancient pair of inexpressibles.

Here is a bit of conversation lately overheard in a street in Providence, R. I.:

Charlie, did you ever hear it that a person found a four-legged dog and put it in their shoe, the first gentleman or lady the dog walked with would be his husband or wife?"

"I never heard of it before."

"Well, I found one and put it in my shoe this morning, and you know the first one I have walked with."

"I wonder if it's true."

An officer of any sort has no right to meddle in politics. His office will keep him busy if he is faithful to his duties.

Good farming pays well. Bad management in farming, as well as in every other business, will not pay.

Which is the wickedest portion of America? Why? Sin—laughing to be sure.

A critic says of a famous singer: "She sing a few nice and puts great many."

A roaring trade at a meagerie.

A good new marriage notice.