

ONE OF THE LOSERS.

I see her stand in the twilight there,
Her hand and her temple gray;
Her furrowed face it is marked with care,
Rough is her garb and thin with the wear
Of the work of the long, long day.

She turns her face to the distant skies—
It is anxious and drawn with pain—
And slowly she shakes her head and sighs,
Sadly the tears course from her eyes
As she enters her 404 again.

Oh, the white road stretches across the plain,
And it's here that she comes each day,
For she has not heard that her boy was slain,
And she does not know that she looks in vain
Through the twilight dim and gray.

MEG'S WILD RIDE.

BY ETHELYN LESLIE HUSTON.

Meg's "wheel" was not one of those fascinating lady's bicycles. She did not spin airily over an asphalt pavement to park or boulevard. Meg's "wheel" weighed several hundred pounds. She rode it out over the Nebraska plains. And, after all, it wasn't Meg's wheel anyhow, for it belonged to the Northern Pacific railroad and was made of iron and painted red, and was a tricycle instead of a bicycle.

Meg lived on a ranch, and the nearest village where the trains sometimes designed to stop for a panting moment was called Squaw Creek. Meg owned a sturdy little broncho pony, which she would ride on a swift loping down the long trail which lay like a white ribbon over the prairie, and at the village she would visit at the "store" where Mr. Smith sold candy and saddles and flannel shirts and lariats and many other things. And then she would rattle her pony's heels, slipping and scrambling down the bluff road to the station, where she would arrive in a cloud of dust and merrily hail the agent, Frank Graham. It was here Meg would ride her tricycle, which was a railroad "wheel" and provided by the company for the agent's use. And though it was heavy Meg's strong arms could make the handlebar fly back and forth while the wheel glided swiftly over the gleaming rails.

Late one afternoon Meg rode to the "store" and found some little excitement over a cattle train that had been ditched about two miles below the station. The accident was caused by spread rails, the men said, and nobody was hurt, but it would delay the express, which was due in two hours. Meg rode down to the scene of the accident where the train men were busy. It was already growing dark and they had built great bonfires to help them to clear up what they could while waiting for the wrecking train. Frank, the agent, had been to the wreck on the tricycle and had raced back to the little station to wire for the wrecking engine and warn the express, as the road wound snake-like along the broad Missouri river in the heavy shadows at the foot of the bluff, and as it was the "flyer" it could hardly be signaled safely. It was quite dark when Meg finally turned her pony's nose toward the station and cantered slowly along to say "how-de-do" to Frank and get the papers he promised her to take home. Also it could not be long till the "flyer" would be due, and Meg loved to see the long, bright train loaded with passengers and flashing its gleam of the great world beyond the plains into her longing eyes for a brief moment.

As her pony's heels thudded lazily along beside the track the station gradually came into view. And then Meg's heart leaped oddly in her breast and her eyes widened. For the station was in total darkness. Meg's skirt came down with a swish on her pony's flank, and Teddy, amazed and indignant, bucked decidedly to express his strong disapproval of such actions. For he and his young mistress understood each other and the quirt was never used except in gentle "love taps." Meg was not western raised for nothing, however, and she retained her place on Teddy's back. Finally his slender legs stretched out and his nimble heels skimmed the sage bush and sharp cactus till the station was reached. Then Meg flung herself from the saddle with a stifled cry, for the agent lay face downward on the dark platform, and the closed doors and black windows of the station, together with the unlighted signal lamps, told a story that froze Meg's blood. She rolled Frank over, but he was unconscious from a blow on the back of the head, evidently given by robbers.

"And the flyer must be due!" cried Meg, in an agony of despair. She knew nothing of the mechanism of the signal lamps and to return to the wreck for help would be hopeless, for they would be too late.

What was to be done? As Meg moaned aloud Teddy whinnied uneasily in reply. She looked at him hopelessly. The flyer sometimes stopped at a watering tank up the track, but there was a bridge to cross between and Teddy would be useless. Then her eyes fell on the tricycle on the main track, where it had been left when Frank was attacked. It was the only chance and Meg leaped on the machine.

In a moment Teddy and the unconscious agent were alone with the silent station, while down the track the "click-click, click-click" of the railroad wheel grew faster and fainter in the distance. The only hope was to reach the water tank before the express left. Meg's white lips parted with a sob, while her wide eyes strained before her through the blackness for that yellow eye of light that must surely be due.

"Click-click," went the machine. "Waiting!" it seemed to cry, as the girl's hands tightened convulsively on the handles. The wheels spun over the track with a low roar that again and again, as Meg swung around the curves, seemed the oncoming roar of the express. The frightened girl's mouth seemed filled with ashes, her lips were dry and stiff and the sharp particles of sand that swept up into her face and eyes stung like a storm of needles. Her back ached and pained and sharp knives seemed shooting down her arms and through her numb and stiff hands that now hardly felt the handlebars.

Suddenly the headlight of the express (standing at the tank) loomed in the near distance. Frantically Meg tried to stop her machine, but the best she could do was to retard its progress as it approached the now blinding glare of the light. With a shriek of agony and despair Meg reeled back in a faint. The helpless little hands fell from the bar and one crash swept her into a merciful oblivion.

But Meg was not killed. When she opened her eyes her face and hair were wet where the trainmen had dashed water over her, and many anxious eyes were looking down at her face. She had been in time, after all, though the engine was just about to start from the watering tank as she dashed into it. The bicycle was a wreck, and Meg's left arm was broken and her head cut and her body bruised. But she had saved the train and was a heroine. Sympathetic women from the Pullman coaches and from the tourist cars and weary travelers from the emigrant cars together thanked the white-faced girl lying on the ground in the yellow light of the lanterns. While Meg was convalescing slowly and being mended up generally her little brown-haired mother hovered around her in an ecstasy of thankfulness, and brawny ranchers rode in miles to see "that gal of Stannard's who saved the flyer." Letters arrived from the president and other high officials of the Northern Pacific road, containing beautifully printed pieces of paper bearing very illegibly written signatures and mysterious little holes punched through, and Meg discovered that she was a very important young lady with a bank account.

But, best of all to her, when she was well she went down daily to the "store" and to see Frank Graham, who was convalescing, too, after a very long illness, and she glided swiftly and happily on a "lady's wheel" of latest make.—Chicago Record.

The American Way of Making War.
The war is practically at an end. It has been one of the shortest wars on record. The president sent his ultimatum to Spain on April 20. The American ambassador to Spain received his passports on the following day. This makes little over three months. In that time the Americans have destroyed two fleets and, in fact, totally annihilated the sea power of their enemy. They have captured two great ports. They have defeated the Spanish troops in the field and have taken a province and thousands of prisoners. Above all, they have improvised the army with which they did this part of the work. Not bad for the interval between rent day and rent day! The manner of the improvisation is a striking indication, in some ways, of the American system. Most of the troops who swarmed up the slopes at Santiago and captured entrenched positions held by seasoned troops and swept by artillery were mere untrained butchers, bakers and candlestick makers at the beginning of the war. When they went into camp at Tampa they were the rawest of raw hands. Many of their officers were probably very little better. Their commissariat was a practical joke. Transports, medical service, all had to be created. The chief part of their equipment was their spirit as free men, their general intelligence, their lifelong habit of turning their hands and brains to anything, and to master it at uncommonly short notice. In one word, they had nothing at their back but the system; and their whole military organization is based on the belief that, with this, they have the wherewithal for the ruggedest hour that time and spite can bring against their country in time of danger.—London Daily Chronicle.

Reasoning by Analogy.
"Ah," said little Mrs. Newlywed, dreamily, "my husband is as steady as a clock." She gave a little half sigh as she said it and looked fixedly at that article—the clock, not her husband. Then she stood it on its head, blew into the keyhole, and tried to persuade it to do its duty in other feminine ways. It was one of those 98-cent alabaster clocks, and she had just bought it. A dainty creature, with gilded hands and forget-me-nots upon the face. The dealer had guaranteed it to run for a life time, and it had run down and utterly collapsed in just five minutes and 37 seconds. "My husband is as steady as a clock," she said, dreamily.—Judge.

Automatic Alarm for Mines.
A Prussian inventor has patented an automatic alarm apparatus to indicate the presence of firedamp in mines, a large metal funnel being placed over the coal, with a counterpoised aluminum plate at the top, which is lifted by the light gas and completes an electric circuit.

Forty years ago the first missionary was eaten on the Fiji Islands.

DUG A FELLOW PRISONER'S GRAVE.

Experience of an American Under Lopez in a Cuban Prison.

Colonel B. F. Sawyer, a prominent Southern journalist and at present the chief editorial writer of the Rome (Ga.) Tribune, is one of the oldest and most picturesque characters in the land of Dixie.

When a boy of fifteen or sixteen his fiery spirit led him into our war with Mexico, and the youngster thoroughly enjoyed it all the way through. After returning to his home in Alabama the lad didn't feel like settling down. He was fond of adventure, and the life of a soldier in a strange land suited him exactly.

It was not long before he became interested in the cause of free Cuba, and as one of the periodical insurrections in that country was then in progress he joined the ill-fated expedition of Lopez. The capture and execution of his chief left the boy and his comrades in a bad fix. The few prisoners who were not put to death were chained in couples and placed on the public works.

Sawyer was harshly treated, and it looked as though exposure and hard work would kill him. He managed to send a note to the American consul, but nothing was done for him. One of the Spaniards guarding him was rather clever, and the captive sent his letters through his hands. The half-starved young American awoke one morning to find that the prisoner chained to him was lying dead by his side. The survivor was ordered to bury him, and when the chain binding him to the corpse was rudely broken he dug a grave for his late fellow-sufferer. There was no coffin. The grave was scooped in the sand by Sawyer's tired and trembling hands.

The situation was desperate. Sawyer then wrote a long letter to the British consul, telling his whole story—his youth, his pitiful condition, the neglect of the American consul and many other matters.

The very next day a big Englishman visited the camp. He was very mad and very overbearing in his manner. He talked with the boy prisoner and told him to be of good cheer. How he did it nobody but himself and the Spanish authorities ever knew, but in less than twenty-four hours he secured Sawyer's release and put him on a vessel bound for America.

Sawyer devoted himself for a few years to politics and planting in Alabama, but the first call to arms in the civil war found him ready. At that time he was a prosperous man. He cared nothing for money, and when he organized his company he insisted upon equipping it at his own expense. He paid for uniforms, guns, canteens, knapsacks and everything out of his own pocket.

He was a gallant fighter, and his men were imbued with his fearless spirit. Of course he was promoted. He rose to a colonelcy, and would have gone higher if he had cared for such trifles as rank and title.

The war left very few of his men alive or unscathed. They fought like tigers and nearly all of them were slain in battle.

At the close of the war the colonel faced his new duties and responsibilities and showed that he could work as hard as he could fight.

Commemorating Worth in China.
Chinese notions of death are by no means morbid, and a prosperous tradesman is proud of the handsome "shell" which confronts all who enter his door, especially as it is adorned with deep-carved golden characters, which tell his virtues—"Mr. Builder-of-a-Monastery-Chang," "Mr. Feeder-of-the-Widows-Tsang," and so on. This is less expensive and more useful than the erection of wayside arches, such as one often sees set up to commemorate "works of merit." These "drawing room" coffins are of polished cedar or kindred wood. They are massive constructions of a peculiar shape, with curving sides some two and a half inches thick, overhanging base and top and sunk ends, lighter and wider at the head, but with straight sides. Within they are carefully papered for use, and furnished with four to six gallons of lime, on which the body rests. Clad complete with a special cap and rolled in a bed quilt, the defunct Celestials are laid to rest.

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The latest computation shows that it is 2413 miles from San Francisco to Honolulu and 8050 miles from San Francisco to Manila, Philippine Islands, by way of Honolulu.

A GLIMPSE OF DREYFUS.

PITIFUL LIFE'S ROUTINE OF THE PRISONER ON DEVIL'S ISLAND.

Narrative of the Cook on Board the Dutch Ship Andalusia. Which Recently Visited the French Penal Colony—Appearance of the Prisoner—Aged Rapidly.

Our ship, the Netherland steamship Andalusia, was anchored off Devil's Island recently after a visit to Cayenne, when we were hailed from shore. At the same time a small boat put off, manned by soldiers. They came alongside to ask the captain for the loan of a cook while the Andalusia was waiting for freight. The cook of the little garrison had broken his arm, they said, and our cook was to teach one of their men, so that he might be able to attend to the kitchen until another was sent by the commander.

The captain sent me to the island, and while busy in the little kitchen instructing a soldier in the mysteries of broiling lamb chops and cooking pork I had plenty of opportunity to question Captain Dreyfus' guards. The men, who had at first seemed disinclined to speak, became loquacious after awhile. "He" was not so ill-treated as those in the world seemed to think; "he" is not confined; "he" can go everywhere on the island. Of course, two men are always at his heels. "He" gets up between 6 and 7 in the morning, and his first breakfast consists of a cup of chocolate. If the weather is good "he" goes for a walk soon afterward and winds up his promenade by a bath.

"But are you not afraid he might swim away or commit suicide?" I asked.

"Not at all," said the soldiers, "for a rope is fastened to both his wrists, and the ends of the rope are in the hands of the guard. After the bath he takes his second breakfast—butter, bread, ham or eggs and a bottle of beer. Then he goes in for study. He reads and writes for several hours."

"What kind of books has he got?" The soldiers looked at each other. After awhile one of them said: "He is only allowed to read technical works, but he can write whatever he pleases. He is now writing an account of his life."

"Must he show you what he writes?"
"No; we read only the letters he desires to have forwarded. These are sent to the commander at Cayenne."

"And does the commander send them off as received?"

"No, they are copied and the originals are retained at Cayenne."

"What does he do besides reading and writing?"
"Two weeks ago we received permission from the commander to play cards with the prisoner, and he has become an inveterate gambler since. After dinner—he has always soup, a roast and dessert—about 2 o'clock in the afternoon we always play baccarat together."

"What are the stakes?"

The soldier laughed. "He has not got a son and there are not probably three francs on the whole island. We play for shells. The prisoner gets his supper at 6 in the evening—roast, ham and a bottle of beer. Soon afterward he goes to bed. He is not allowed to have a light, you know. Only the guard on the door keeps up a wood fire. He says the hours from 7 to 10 are his worst. He cannot go to sleep before 10 o'clock and the guard is not allowed to answer any questions he may put. In the day time we may talk to him, but only on the most trifling subjects, the weather, his health, etc. Our own country is not to be mentioned."

"Is he allowed to smoke?"

"No; that is, I think he is not, for the commander does not furnish him tobacco."

"May I leave some cigars for him?"

The soldier did not answer. I emptied my tobacco pouch and my cigar case on the table. I hope he got what I left for him.

As I was about to return to my ship I saw a man, followed by two soldiers, approaching the strand. Dreyfus! He seemed to have heard of my presence and measured me with questioning looks. His lips moved, but he did not speak. He is a middle-aged man, cadaverous and of a yellow complexion. His eyes are deep in their sockets; he walks with a stoop and his forehead is furrowed. He is growing old rapidly, no doubt.

Dreyfus whispered with his guard and, when the latter had nodded assent, walked up to me and shook me by the hand. "Bring my good wishes to the wide world," he said, in a voice quivering with emotion. Then he walked slowly toward his hut, where he remained standing at the door, waving his hand as my boat dashed into the billows. Half an hour later we were on our way home.—Karl Weinheber, Cook of the Netherland Steamship Andalusia, in Kuche und Keller.

On the Parana and other South American rivers it is no unusual thing for a steamer to run on to a sandbank and be obliged to wait for several days—sometimes a week—for a heavy rain to float it again.

WARNED BY RATS.

Seamen Think It Prudent to Desert Ship When the Rodents Do.

Seven or eight years ago a schooner which had no name was deserted by rats while she lay in Milwaukee. Two of her crew quit immediately. The remaining two stayed on the craft. This schooner was blown ashore at Silver Creek, Lake Erie. The two men were taken off by a life-saving crew.

A more recent case of this kind was that of the steamer Idaho, which went down off Long Point, Lake Erie, last November. This boat put out of Buffalo just ahead of the hardest blow of last season. Once she was regarded as the finest passenger boat on the lakes. On this, her last trip, she was buffeted about for several hours. She pounded by Long Point, eighty miles northwest of Buffalo, and then her captain ordered her brought about that she might run under Long Point for shelter. The rush of waves was too much for her. She was caught in the roll of the sea and she gradually filled and sank. Of her crew of twenty-one men, nineteen were drowned. The first mate and a seaman named Gill climbed into the rigging, where they remained thirty-six hours. They were finally taken off by the steamer Mariposa.

It was learned shortly after the wreck that just before the vessel left her moorings, a swarm of rats crawled over the hawsers to the wharf. This was known to part of the crew and four men deserted at the last moment. Their places were filled by two vagabonds who were lounging along the docks. When the old stoop was well out of port and beating hard, the old steward, who was the oldest of his class on the lakes, learned that the rats had left the ship the hour of her departure. He raved because the fact had been kept from him. When the boat began to roll and plunge and the great waves broke over her, old Lally, the steward, got down on his knees and prayed. He was the first to be washed overboard.

The captain of a sailing vessel was asked recently why he and other lake-men placed so much confidence in the movements of rats.

"Because it has been shown that rats are an unfailing sign," he said. "It has been proved a hundred times. There are a whole lot of things in this world that we don't know anything about. Why isn't it sensible to believe that God designated rats as messengers to warn navigators of danger? Rats live in the very fibres of a ship. They see what we can't see. When the timbers are hollowed and the seams open, these little animals know that the ship is unsafe and they desert it. Knowledge of some kind was probably settled on them by one of the powers of which we know absolutely nothing."

An Acquired Habit.

It is a matter of general knowledge that the mountain parrot of New Zealand, the kea, has acquired the very destructive habit of piercing the backs of sheep with its sharp beak in order to feed on the kidney fat of the very unfortunate animals attacked. It was at one time believed that the birds had learned this habit from procuring fatty particles from the skins of sheep which had been slaughtered; but now a more likely solution of the problem has been suggested by a correspondent of the Zoologist. This gentleman, who writes from Melbourne, tells us that in the hilly districts of the middle island of New Zealand there grows in great quantity a white lichen which bears a strong resemblance to sheep's wool. Beneath this lichen are to be found small white fatty substances, which some suppose to be the seeds of the plant, and others describe as maggots which infest it; but whatever they be, they form a favorite food of the kea. It is suggested that the bird, misled by the resemblance of the sheep's wool, digs down into the flesh in the hope of finding this white substance of which it is so fond, and that in this way the new habit has been originated. In the first place, probably the birds are misled by mistaking dead sheep for masses of the lichen under which they had been accustomed to find their favorite food.—Chambers's Journal.

Kirmess.

In some portions of Germany the kirmess, or church mass, formerly danced in honor of the dedication of a church, is now observed with the special character of a harvest home. It marks the close of the year's labor and is celebrated by three days of music, feasting and dancing with partners chosen or allotted, according to degree of comeliness, at the preceding May festival.

In south Germany the end of the harvest is marked by the sickle feast. The last sheaf is carried in triumph to the barn and placed on the floor, while the younger couples dance around it. One half of it is then decked with ribbons and hung aloft while the other half is burned. Its ashes are treasured as a remedy for rheumatism and are sometimes used in making amulets or charms. The peasants leave for Wodan, or "the old one," a few ears of corn and a small number of apples, it being considered unlucky to strip either field or tree entirely bare.—Lippincott's.

ENVY.

Butterfly, he cry an' sigh,
As he met me 'nead de tree,
Whab de loaffs' lawg went by;
"Wish! I was a honey bee.
He hab comfort in completeness;
Got a hive chock full o' sweetness
Luckier dan de likes o' me.
Wish! I was a honey bee."

Says de bee, says he to me,
"Tain' no use foh me to try
To be frolickin' an' free.
Wish! I was a butterfly.
"Nuffa" 'tall to do but dancin'
Whab de sunbeam comes a-glanctn',
I must toll an' sleep an' die.
Wish! I was a butterfly!"
—Washington Star.

HUMOROUS.

"How was your amateur opera performance?" "It was so poor that it was really rich."

Train up a servant girl in the way she should go, and the first thing you know she's gone.

"Obrian got mixed up with a mad bull yesterday." "How did it end?" "It was a toss up."

"You remind me so much of my poor, dear, first husband!" "You remind me of him altogether too much, my dear."

By the time a man has a few dollars saved up for his old age he is told that his daughter has talents which should be cultivated.

"Why, Jim, what did you shoot that man for?" "To avoid trouble. I new we'd be quarrelin' if we kep' on, and I hate a row."

The art of saloring
Most women lack,
But she who's pretty may
Command a smack.

Jones—For awhile John was clean out of his mind about that girl, Smith—And now? Jones—Oh, now the girl is clean out of her mind.

"Oh, Alice! my new dress looks nice enough to eat." "Well, I wouldn't eat it if I were you. I don't believe it would set so well on the inside."

Manager—I hope your Cuban play has lots of local color in it. Dramatist—Oh, yes. In the last act the Spanish villain dies of yellow fever.

"Hans, if you are very good and get a high mark in school, I will give you a ham sandwich." "But, mamma, do you imagine I can be bribed?"

"I think I have pretty well your language the master of," said the forger, "but tell me how, as I hear a man say, one can cut a lot of ice with his dough?"

Governor of the Prison—What is the cause of this unseemly delay? Jailor—That expert headman you engaged from the medical school is sterilizing the axe.

Tourist—Can you tell me where Mr. Greencorn's cottage is? Small Native—I can for a nickel. Tourist—Here is the nickel; now where is it? Small Native—It's burnt down.

Judge—You robbed your benefactor in a most shameful way. Do you feel so uncompunctious of conscience? Prisoner—Before answering, sir, I would like to consult my counsel.

What ever may be said of what
The Chinese actors do,
One fault at least they haven't got—
They never miss their queue.

Boggs—How is it that your hair is quite white, while your beard is very dark? Nogg's—It's the most natural thing in the world. Boggs—Indeed! Nogg's—It's thirty years older.

The Dearest Girl—What makes you old bachelors say such horrid things? Married men do not talk that way. The Savage Bachelor—No, we only say what the married men think.

Mrs. Fiddle—I thought you wanted that dog bought of you well bred? Dog Dealer—So it is, mum. Mrs. Fiddle—Oh, no, it isn't; it bolts its food in the most vulgar manner!

"The Binkses must buy everything on the instalment plan." "What makes you think so?" "I heard Jimmy Binks ask his father whether their new baby would be taken away if they couldn't keep up the payments."

Landlady—That new boarder is either married or a widower. Daughter—Why, mamma; he says he is a bachelor. Landlady—Don't you believe he is. When he opens his pocketbook to pay his board he always turns his back to me.

Women Telegraphers in Holland.

In Holland, and Germany, too, women are employed in the stations of the government's railroad and telegraph lines. Woman is said to love brass buttons and uniforms. In the land of the Teuton she has a chance to discover how it feels to wear them herself. In winter the railroad woman wears a uniform of postilion blue cloth trimmed with red braid and brass buttons, and in summer a similar uniform of lighter material with white braid decorations is worn.

Families Badly Mixed.

On Butler Taylor's farm bantam chickens and quails are mixed. The quail hen hatched chickens and the bantam is the proud mother of a covey of little quails. The little chickens followed the quail mother off into the sedge and are as wild as real quails. The bantam's little quails deport themselves in the yard and coop the same as regulation chickens.—Carrollton (Ky.) Democrat.