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ALEXANDRIA, - LOUISIANA.

IN THE MIDDLE WEST.

A Story of Life in the Great Mississippi Valley.

BY ALVA MILTON KERR.

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CHAPTER XXI.—CONTINUED.

Some such shadowy, wandering wish as this last was turning wearily about in John Earling's mind when morning came. He had come back to the town when he saw that the sickening tragedy on the hill was inevitable, and, climbing to his room under the roof of Bower's Block, paced to and fro for hours. At last he sat down between the dim lamp and lukewarm stove with his face in his hands and thought and thought upon the myriad-colored problem of existence. He could not lay the colors straight, and at last the hues all blent, and the problem seemed a mighty, swiftly-whirling wheel that drew sparks out of the darkness by the thousands and they streamed down the blending spokes and entered through the vast and sunlike hub into what seemed the sun itself; then he thought the wheel was Time and the sparks were lives, and he strained to see into the region where they went until he seemed to be going blind, and the great wheel seemed receding and growing less and less, and going farther and farther into the darkness, until it dwindled to a single spark which seemed to turn into the doomed book-keeper's voice, and wail to him faintly from under the fatal oak: "See Ivyl Snaer! see-Ivyl-S-n-a-e-r!" Far and far away in the storm it seemed, and he was striving vainly to go to it, when it slowly changed and seemed the voice of Celeste singing silverly away up in the sky. Then suddenly it seemed summer time and he and Celeste were hunting in the flowers and grass for Maun's grave. But they could not find it, and stood looking into each other's eyes with wondering gaze, when Celeste said, slowly: "It was made here, but the grass has all grown over it, and it must be as if it had never been!" and he thought such a look as he had never seen there before, a look that was a kind of rosy light, come into her face and shone into his and filled him with so sweet a feeling that he awoke, and the gray dawn was filtering in through the frosty window and the storm was pelting against it and beating over and scouring across the tin roof of Bower's Block.

In a moment, when the truth and his dreams were separated, the dark past came back upon him, and he shivered and got up and moved sorely about, replacing his damp, torn clothing with dry apparel. Then he bathed his face, and putting on his overcoat started out, but paused at the door and took from his pocket the scrap of paper addressed to Fowler which he found on that awful trail, and which contained Maun's confession of her love for John Earling, and that through it she knew of her sin, and begged that she and Fowler might never meet again. For some time he stood still looking at the heart-breaking thing, and seeing all the frightful detail of the crime, as he had a hundred times, pass over it. "She didn't know! She didn't know!" he whispered, and went shuddering back to the stove, and opening it put the tell-tale paper into the smoldering fire, and with it Maun's most saddening secret. Then he went down and got a cup of coffee at the hotel where he took his meals, hearing every where a buzz about the tragedy of the night, and how the coroner had gone out to cut the body down. But he said nothing; to him the case was ended, and he climbed the stairs to the office of Bower & Woodman and refreshing the fires, for the old, slipshod janitor had not yet appeared, he destroyed all the notes he had made touching the trial and set at once to work upon some new business. But, though turning his mind strenuously from the torturing field which he had just left, that cry: "See Ivyl Snaer! see Ivyl Snaer!" kept ringing within him, immingled somehow with Celeste's far-off, silvery singing. He well-nigh believed it a delusion; but he could not silence it, and got up ere long and stood at the window brooding over it. What could the doomed man have meant by calling after him? What had the name to do with him? He repeated it over again and again, then he went back carefully along the pathway of his life trying to recall every name he had ever heard. Suddenly he started and walked about excitedly. He remembered having heard Joel Whitney mention this curious name years before in connection with the murder of his father. Ah, was he stumbling upon the secret of that long-forgotten mystery? The blood surged into his temples, and he began hurriedly to put on his overcoat. It was by no means clear what he should do, but something must be done about this! At the door he met Absalom Heater. That long-striding, wordless person came directly in, and, flirting the snow from his dark beard, threw his mealy miller's hat upon the table and sat down.

"That still devil knowed something you ought to know," he began, looking a little consciously at John Earling, who stood with his hand on the door-knob regarding him in steady silence, "and I wanted to make him spitter out, but the boys couldn't wait; you heard him callin' to you 'spose?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had 'im by the throttle tryin' to hold it open long enough for 'im to get rid of what was hurtin' 'im, but they pulled the hemp on 'im in spite of me. Think he knowed somethin' you ought to know. That Evil Snare that he was yellin' about was the chap that got your pap's farm; struck me he knowed how he got it!"

"Did you know Ivyl Snaer?"

"I was a youngster then, but I remember 'im."

"Did you ever see Fowler before?"

"Sometimes thought I had; couldn't place 'im."

John Earling looked at him soberly a moment. "Ab," he said, with an imploring thread in his voice, "why did you help do that awful thieg last night?"

Captain Heater put his hand on his hat and moved it about on the table with his eyes following it. "Well, sir," and he looked up, "he was a pisen scrub; what's the use, kid, *you* know he was guilty! Didn't the whipped pup beller for mercy when he fell among the chairs before you over in the court-house there?"

"Yes, he was guilty without a doubt, and as far as man may judge received only what he had earned, perhaps, but the law should be supreme or it is nothing."

"I know, and it found 'im guilty *once*, and by the Eternal *once* is plenty!" and Absalom hit his hat a blow that left it exceedingly flat, with a mimic cloud of meal and flour floating upward from it. "The law is a big and bully thing, kid, but sometimes it's so slow it's own shadder can't help from runnin' over it! We livened 'er up a bit last night, I guess!"

"Yes, it was very lively," said John Earling, bitterly; "in the eyes of the law it was a murder!"

"In the eyes of the deuce! What's the law but the voice of the people? and when the people's voice wont work it's their business to turn out and 'tend to things with their *hands*. They was out last night!" and Absalom got up and walked about in his exulting bitterness.

John Earling stood still with his hand on the door-knob following him with his eyes. Absalom wheeled about and came up to him, and laid his big hand on the young man's shoulder in a tender, half-bashful, agitated way. "Couldn't help it, law or no law," he said. "Me and him couldn't sleep in the same world no longer together. it ain't big enough! Ever since that mornin' we pulled the miss out of the river he's been crowdin' me, crowdin' me! I know what he done; he more'n killed her! I seen and knowed more'n I told at the trial, and so did you. He done you a awful wrong, kid; more'n most folks knows, I guess, and still you tried to save the whelp's pelt for the law. It's like you, but I couldn't stand his crowdin'; I know what he done to you and I couldn't stand it! I used to nuss you when you wus a baby, kid, and I follered you out from Ohier because—because—I was afeard somethin' might harm you, and though I don't see you very often, or ever say much, that yoke of boys of mine over on the hill yonder ain't no nigher to me than you are, and I couldn't stand his crowdin'. I knowed your mother, kid; she was a kind of angel-woman; I liked her better than my own mother, mean as it sounds to say it, and I couldn't stand his crowdin' any longer!"

A mist was in Absalom's eyes as he jerked these sentences, and with the last word he dropped John Earling's hand and shot out of the door and went away through the storm toward the mill, being quite spent with such, for him, lingual prodigality.

A mist was in the young man's eyes, too, as he went to the window and looked out. The life-long love of the brave, bashful, bungling Absalom seemed a very sweet thing to him in his loneliness.

That afternoon the storm lulled, and when darkness gathered in the streets of Openstone the tempest fetched only an occasional sob. When the sun came up again it seemed very far to the east of Openstone, so still and lucent was the air and so broad-backed and definite seemed the world in its glistening coat of snow. At about eleven o'clock the morning passenger train came creaking into Openstone, preceeded by a big snow-plow, which, like some enormous, white-winged animal, came cleaving through the drifts and whirling the gleaming mass from its mighty shares fifty feet to right and left. Then additional gangs of men were added to the section force to shovel the snow from the buried rails, and John Earling was on the train that rolled out of Openstone that afternoon, going in search of Ivyl Snaer. In the morning he had gone to bid the old lawyer good-bye, and found him propped up in a big chair before a roaring fire in the grate under the elk's head. "Snum!" exclaimed the old man, grasping John Earling's hand with his trembling crumpled fists, "the right thing happened in a hurry this time!"

John Earling shook his head deprecatingly.

"Hard, but right; I wonder what Joel thinks now?" said the old lawyer.

John Earling shut his lips tight and shook his head again. He did not wish to touch the subject; the whole bitter, terrible theme was like a nightmare to him. "I am going away for awhile," he said, "and I came to say good-bye."

The old man put out his trembling hand at once and whispered: "Good-bye!" and closed his eyes, holding fast to John Earling's hand. After a moment he whispered again: "God bless you; you have worked hard all your life, and you ought to go away from here awhile and rest. I know you'll go right, and do right. I used to jeer some at your honesty, but I know you'll win. If I don't wait for you to come back you'll find I didn't forget you. Snum! snum! I'll not forget you!" and the old lawyer rolled his head from side to side with tears slipping from under his closed eyelids.

John Earling's heart melted for the lonely, helpless old man, and he put his arms about his neck and kissed his great forehead, and said, huskily: "You have been very good to me, sir; I shall be grateful as long as I live. Keep a cheerful heart, you will be better in the spring, and I hope we shall see each other then again."

The old man pressed his hand silently, and he went away to prepare for his journey. In the afternoon Judge Bower walked with him to the depot, talking of business then under way and of a future partnership. John Earling's first effort had given him local fame, and Judge Bower wished to employ his fresh young head in connection with his practice, but the young man wished to be free awhile that he might go back to the place where his life began and look into the mist that covered it, and he said he would consider the judge's kind proposal when he returned. On his way to the train he stopped at one of the banks and drew out five hundred dollars of his money, and farther down the street he met Yeslit Popp and Harry driving in a cutter. Yeslit held her nose very high and did not recognize him. Harry nodded, coldly. They and others, who had made a flowery cage for the jail-bird, felt very hardly used in the treatment meted out to their pet. They had not much censure for the elder council employed in the case, to be sure, but for this very young man who in the court-room had brought the culprit to his knees crying for mercy they affected for a long time a most withering contempt. Happily, however, he was entirely unconscious of it.

At the depot a letter was handed him by the old lawyer's attendant with the request that he would not open it until he had left Openstone. After the first station had been passed he took it from his pocket. It contained a check for five hundred dollars. The young man's face colored, and he looked at it half tearfully for a time, then he laid it reverently away in his note book, saying to himself that he would return it to the giver when he came back.

The train rolled onward through a white, undulating country, and at eight o'clock came into Chicago. An omnibus carried him and other passengers across that young Babylon, whose streets, though the winds were glancing icily from the chill bosom of Lake Michigan, were ablaze with light and flowing with theater-going people. On the lake front he presently took a train for the East, hearing the slosh, slosh, of the inflowing ridges of cold water as the train rolled away into the darkness.

Sitting there with arms folded and chin against his chest, the midnight hour found his thoughts, lulled by the rumble and beat of the wheels, turning dreamily among the receding days and deeds and forms and faces that had filled his life. There softly across the smooth sward, among a myriad flickering, leaf-sifted lights, went the velvet-footed Maun. She did not look back, but glanced and wavered and glimmered on and on and on through a thousand slender, sun-flaked tree-trunks, and faded out at last against a long, low slit of blue sea-water. Then somehow he felt himself yearning, not so much for her lost form, as for the beauteous motion that faded with it. Suddenly it seemed so silent that he thought he could hear the blood running through all his veins and the incommunicable sound of thoughts forming and touching together in his brain, and he awoke to find the train stopping at a station, and to see the passengers nodding, yawning, leaning and lying in the dim light about him. All seemed mournful, ghostly, deserted, drear, and his footsteps sounded strange and intrusive.

So the night, broken for him and full of dreams, jostled, and rumbled and jarred on into the dawn, and that evening the train rolled into Earlingford. Very strange did John Earling feel as he walked down the main street of this old town on the banks of the Ohio. It had been named for his father, he knew, and a thousand times that father, to him unknown, had gone along the self-same street, and doubtless his eyes had fallen upon many of the self-same s tore fronts, and his footsteps upon many of the same worn stones. He himself had been borne away from it when a child, going down the broad river on a boat, as he had heard Joel Whitney tell, and thence by rail into the West; and now he had come again after twenty years had gone, and, knowing no one and himself utterly unknown, was walking with a kind of expectant, wondering step along the twilight street of the town that bore his name. Many of the passers looked curiously at the tall, pale youth, but among all their faces there passed not one that he had ever seen.

A light snow lay upon the ground and the air was motionless and chill. He turned into one of the two rather dingy houses that divided the hotel honors of the place, and no one being in the little yellow office, he wrote his name in the much bespattered register and waited. He could not but feel it strange that a place so intimately known and connected with his antecedents should be so unfamiliar to him. He went to the open door and looked out. The vim and stir and freshness of Openstone was not there. The long, weather-beaten street had some loitering pedestrians in it and a team hitched here and there, and upon the porch of the other hotel the lean landlord stood looking with sour dolefulness toward him. The town seemed very dull, though doubtless it had its lively days, for the region was well-to-do and busy enough, and the farms were old and valuable. In a moment John Earling's hostess, a fat lady who leaned back and shook a good deal about the bust and gastric region when she stepped, came bustling in behind the counter. He went forward as she courtesied and wiped her fat hands upon her apron, and asked if he might obtain lodging for the night.

"Certainly," said the fat lady, with a very agreeable smile; "jist step in this way with your baggage and take the parlor bed-room. My son should a been out to the depot and brought up your things, but he's out to the farm gettin' in a cow, and he didn't get back until jist now. Set your things right down there; I'll send my daughter in with some fresh water for your pitcher. Now, what might your name be?"

"John Earling, ma'am."

The fat woman's mouth and eyes perceptibly widened. "Lawk!" she gasped, "be you any kin to John Earling who was murdered down on the south road twenty year ago?"

"I have been told that it was my father who lost his life there."

"*Lawk!*" with a great gasp of wonder, "you ain't baby Earling, be you?"

"I presume I was once, ma'am."

"The fat lady had her arms full of clothes which she had gathered off from the bed and was pausing in the door; "L-a-w-k!" in a long, gasping whi-per, and staring over the clothes at him, "*how* you *hev* growed!"

John Earling smiled, and after staring at him a moment longer with something like stupid wonder, her face flushed and a look of awe came into it, and she started on, and he heard her say: "Lawk! lawk!" and run against the door-casing as she emerged from the parlor into the hall.

The young man brushed the dust from his clothes and sat down in the parlor and took up a book. Presently the fat lady came puffing in with towels and water, and after putting them in the bed-room came out and paused by the door with arms akimbo. She evidently purposed saying something, but staring a moment at the young man seemed to take it all away, for she only gasped, wonderingly: "Lawk! lawk!" and went out.

John Earling smiled again and wondered who she was. Afterward a shy-eyed girl went by the door and rang a bell upon the veranda, but the stout landlady came herself, and with a deal of color in her full-moon face, brought John Earling to supper. She seemed not yet to have entirely overtaken herself, for when he sat down at table and she turned away toward the kitchen, she said, with a sort of sighing puff: "Lawk! lawk!"

John Earling had a very good supper indeed and delivered to him with a deal of awe and polite painstaking. When he had partly done eating an elderly, bald, ruddy, sweet-cider-consuming sort of a gentleman entered, and being seated, the fat landlady said: "Squire Thorp, make you acquainted with John Earling—Mr. John Earling, he used to be baby Earling when I was Hettie Spavin and worked for his mother. But, lawk! lawk! *how* he *has* growed!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—To be content is not to be satisfied. No one ought to be satisfied with the imperfect.

HOME AND FARM.

—It rests you, in sewing, to change your position frequently.—*Christian at Work.*

—It is said hoarseness may be relieved by using the white of an egg, thoroughly beaten, mixed with lemon-juice and sugar. Take a teaspoonful occasionally.—*N. Y. Independent.*

—To restore glossy silk when the gloss is caused by constant wear, moisten the silk with a sponge, lay a damp cloth over it and pass a hot iron quickly over the cloth several times till it is quite dry.—*Boston Bulletin.*

—Mint sauce: Take the youngest leaves of spearmint, carefully cut away all stems, chop very fine, put a teaspoonful of sugar to two or three of the mint, use sufficient vinegar to be thoroughly flavored by the mint. Prepare it at least an hour before it is to be used.—*Boston Budget.*

—Stock need more heat-producing food in winter than in summer, even to live. The fat-forming and heat-producing elements should be made to bear a certain relationship to each other, according to the season of the year.—*Farmer and Stockman.*

—Wall-pockets, for holding a supply of pocket-handkerchiefs, to be reached without the trouble of pulling open a drawer, are a sensible invention. They are made of plush or leather, and have a flap that keeps the contents of this pocket free from dust.—*Chicago Journal.*

—Should the eye or any other part be blackened by a fall or blow, apply a cloth wrung out of very warm water, and renew it until the pain ceases. The moisture and heat liquefy the blood and send it back to its proper channel. Never use cold water to a bruise.—*N. Y. Telegram.*

—Rice Bread: Rice bread makes a variety for the breakfast-table. Take one pint of well-boiled rice, half a pint of flour, the yolks of four eggs, two spoonfuls of melted butter, one pint of milk, a little salt and a large spoonful of sugar. Beat all these ingredients till very smooth, and then add the beaten whites of the four eggs. Bake in shallow pans, and serve hot.—*Chicago News.*

—Crumb Griddle Cakes: The night before using, put some bread crumbs to soak in one quart of sour milk; in the morning rub through a sieve, and add four well-beaten eggs, two teaspoons soda dissolved in a little water, one tablespoon melted butter, and enough cornmeal to make them the consistency of ordinary griddle cakes. It is better to beat yolks and whites separately, stiring the white lightly in just before baking.—*Exchange.*

—Flaky Soda Biscuits: Mix together a quart of very dry flour, a teaspoonful of baking soda, two of cream of tartar, and a saltspoonful of salt; pass through a sieve, then chop in two ounces of butter or lard, and mix quickly with milk to make a very soft dough. Flour the board well, roll out, sprinkle with flour, double it over and roll out again; cut into biscuits half an inch thick. Bake in a very hot oven about fifteen minutes.—*Good Housekeeping.*

—Old horses often get in the habit of swallowing their food too fast. This is from a painful realization of the danger of not getting a square meal if they delay. None the less the habit is a bad one, and should be corrected. A few clean cobble-stones mixed with the oats in their box and left there will cause them to pick the feed over slowly and masticate it more thoroughly. Cut feed is less likely to be eaten rapidly than whole grain, and dry meal than that which has been wet.—*N. Y. Examiner.*

SIMPLE ROUTINE.

A Magazine Writer Tells How President Cleveland Lives.

President Cleveland rises at half-past seven o'clock, dresses and shaves himself, and is ready for breakfast at eight. He breakfasts en famille, and finishes his morning repast in less than thirty minutes. His breakfast usually consists of oatmeal, beefsteak, coffee, hot cakes and eggs. He is very fond of fruit, and eats freely of it. He leaves the breakfast table and goes directly to his office and begins work without any exercise whatever, writing letters and looking over papers until ten o'clock, when the callers begin to arrive. He then has a siege of a couple of hours with the statesmen and office-seekers, which lasts until 1:30 o'clock, when he is ready for his luncheon. He eats this in less than fifteen minutes, and, like his every day breakfasts and dinners, it is eaten in the private dining-room, and the whole family sit down together. President Cleveland's lunch consists of bread and butter, cold meats, a little fruit and a cup of tea.

After he has eaten it he goes directly back to his office and works steadily until four. At this time he goes out to drive in company with his private secretary, Colonel Lamont. He returns in time for dinner, which is ready at seven o'clock. He does not dress for dinner in the conventional style, except when he has guests, who will appear in evening dress. His private dinners are plain Wine is served only when there are guests present who are accustomed to drinking wine with their meats. He is not so fond of beer as has been reported by the newspapers, the total White House consumption of this article during the past year being not more than two dozen bottles. The President's daily dinner consists of five or six courses. First there is soup, then fish, then a roast, followed by game, dessert, fruit, and, after dinner, coffee. He does not sit long at table and immediately on leaving it he goes up into the corridor of the second story of the White House and smokes a cigar, after which he goes back to his work. President Cleveland never smokes in his office, and the only smoking he does is this solitary post-prandial cigar. He goes to bed about midnight, and falls asleep as soon as his head touches the pillow. His system is such that six or seven hours sleep is sufficient for him.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

—Three men in Flagstaff, A. T., toiled all one night to get a barrel supposed to contain whisky out of a cellar and away to their camp. When they tapped it they found it contained kerosene oil.

The Old Way and the New.

[Chicago Herald.]

"I spent my summer vacation in Europe," said a traveling man for a wholesale grocery house, "and I tell you they are awfully slow over there. The merchants have no snap to them, and the men who supply them with goods and appliances have no enterprise or ingenuity. Why, in all my travels in Europe I never saw a grocer who did not draw and measure kerosene oil in the old-fashioned way. In this country most of our grocers use the oil pump, which throws out exactly a quart of oil, no more, no less, at every stroke."

GEN. RUFUS INGALLS, Quartermaster-General, says St. Jacobs Oil is the best pain-cure.

Governors and other officials recommend Red Star Cough Cure, as safe, prompt, sure. Price, twenty-five cents a bottle.

THERE are thirty thousand brass bands in this country. That accounts for our terrible wind storms.—*Boston Transcript.*

A Wonderful Freak of Nature

is sometimes exhibited in our public exhibitions. When we gaze upon some of the peculiar freaks dame nature occasionally indulges in, our minds revert back to the creation of man, "who is so fearfully and wonderfully made." The mysteries of his nature have been unraveled by Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, and through his knowledge of those mysteries he has been able to prepare his "Golden Medical Discovery," which is a specific for all blood taints, poisons and humors, such as scrofula, pimples, blotches, eruptions, swellings, tumors, ulcers and kindred affections. By druggists.

LEAD astray—the shot of a green sportsman.—*Yonkers Gazette.*

WE would be pleased to know of a man or woman who has never had headache or been subject to constipation. As these seem to be universal troubles a little advice may be in order. Why should persons cram their stomachs with nauseating purgative pills, etc., which sicken and debilitate when such a pleasant and sterling remedy as Prickly Ash Bitters will act mildly and effectively on the liver, kidney, stomach and bowels, and at the same time tone up and strengthen the whole system, causing headache, constipation and all such distressing evils to quickly disappear.

WHO make the best prophets in winter? Plumbers and coal dealers.

$500 Not Called For.

It seems strange that it is necessary to persuade men that you can cure their diseases by offering a premium to the man who fails to receive benefit. And yet Dr. Sage undoubtedly cured thousands of cases of obstinate catarrh with his "Catarrh Remedy," who would never have applied to him, if it had not been for his offer of the above sum for an incurable case. Who is the next bidder for cure or cash?

FEMALE dancers were first introduced in the ballet in 1681. Some of them are with us yet.—*Cambridge Chronicle.*

A Deceived Woman

is the lady who uses cosmetics, face lotions, white lead, bismuth powders, arsenic, etc., in the belief of enriching and beautifying the complexion. It is but temporary, and ultimately destroys the skin beyond the power of nature to restore. Stop it! Stop it now, and use only Dr. Harter's Iron Tonic, which imparts the vigor and loveliness of youth.

"WHAT might be considered the shortest way to spell dog?—K 9."—*New Age.*

A SLIGHT COLD, if neglected, often attacks the lungs. BROWN'S BRONCHIAL TROCHES give sure and immediate relief.

THE latest thing for breakfast—the young man of the family.

THE Public Awards the Palm to Hale's Honey of Horehound and Tar for coughs. Pike's Toothache Drops Cure in one minute.

RAILROAD brakemen should emigrate to Switcher-land.—*St. Paul Herald.*

After Diphtheria

The patient recovers strength slowly, as the system is weak and debilitated, and the blood poisoned by the ravages of the disease. What is needed is a good reliable tonic and blood purifier like Hood's Sarsaparilla, which has just the elements of strength for the body, and vitality and richness for the blood which soon bring back robust health. After scarlet fever or pneumonia it is also of great benefit.

"After recovering from a prolonged sickness with diphtheria, and needing something to build me up, I took two bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla. I felt good results from the first dose. It seemed to go from the top of my head to the ends of my toes. I know Hood's Sarsaparilla is a good thing." G. H. STRATTON, Druggist, Westfield, Mass.

"Upon our little girl, who had been sick with scarlet fever, the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla was most marvelous, entirely removing the poison from her blood and restoring her to good health. Hood's Sarsaparilla deserves our highest praise." E. G. STRATTON, Swampscott, Mass.

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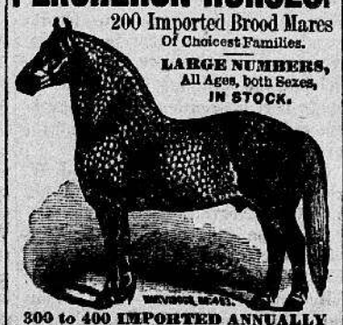

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