Wichita Eagle

"LUNA."

Beautiful moonlight, silently bright,
Hail peaceful evening, beautiful night!
Soft as thy splendor, quiet, serene—
Shine on in thy beauty, fair silvery Queen!

O thou argent moon that seemest to smile,
Erstwhile thou hast laughed on the land of the Nile,
O'er the tombs of the ages, o'er the ruins of power;
On the decay of empire unheeding the hour.

A vision of Eden, effulgent, subdued,
As fresh in pure beauty as the morning rose hued,
Thou wak'nest the feelings that slant brook our control;
Hail beautiful moonlight, thou touchest the soul.

Man buildeth in glory his palaces grand,
With city the tombs he empeoples the land;
O'er the wave spreads the "white wings" of commerce and war,
But thou glideth on forever afar.

Elysian sweet dwell in thy soft beam by night,
And fairy like shadows play in thy soft light,
Till thy spell of enchantment steals o'er each fond breast,
And calmly and sweetly in dreams sinks to rest.

—Arkansas Gazette.

THE GOLDEN SWAN.

The gentleman from the north said that he would give me a penny a word if I would write out the story as I know it and as the poor dear told it to me before she died. Nothing would induce me to do it if I was as able as I am willing to provide for the dear boy she left in my care. He has given me $20 already, to encourage me; and that means 2,000 words! I wonder how many pages it will take to hold that many words? I told the gentleman that I was no scholar, but he said: "Neither am I." And then he told me to write it just as if I were speaking to a dear friend, or my daughter, or my husband; to just "look into" my "heart and write."

But the gentleman—God bless him!—when he told me to write as if I were speaking to my daughter or husband didn't know that they were both in heaven—I was going to say, before he was born—and that I was left, long ago, to fade, like the golden swan over the door, and wither and die alone. I find it pretty hard, sometimes, to make the boy and myself comfortable. He is a good boy, and that's the reason I can't bear to see him a-waiting on the customers; and that's the reason why I could never let him do what I would, of course, expect from a commonplace boy in return for his food and clothes and board. He's been going to school now these three years—ever since he was 10 years old, and he is the finest and most popular scholar in his class, they say.

"Oh," he says, "I'll be a man some day, auntie, and then we'll see about us two!"

If I know anything about human nature—and I ought to, seeing it drunk and sober under this roof for over fifty years—I do not think that my boy will forget me when I become too old to be of much account, for he's a good boy and a brave boy and a frank, honest boy, and he's bound to get along in the world, because he isn't afraid of anything he ever saw. I never knew such a boy. He got his courage from his mother and his high sense of honor from his father.

And that brings me to the story.

Well, I must tell it in my own way. It has taken me two days to get as far as this. You can't order a story, expecting to receive it as you would a "golden buck." If you get it as quickly as all that it won't be worth reading, I guess. These hard, rough fingers of mine are more used to plates, knives and forks and tobies than to a penholder. Only for the boy I'd stop right here, but the snow will soon be flying and the north wind sighing across the frozen lake, through the naked trees and around the gables of the Swan, and my boy must have a warm overcoat and stout boots, and, for Christmas, a pair of skates. His dear little warm, red heart is so set on a pair of skates! He sees all the other boys having a good time every winter on the lake and he envies them, but with no mean envy. His envy, like everything else about him, is of the generous kind.

That is like his dear mother again. And he never saw her. I am the only mother he has ever known. Well, I've tried my best. I remember the night well. It is nearly fourteen years ago now. Cranford Douglas (and a wilder gentleman Virginia never produced) was in here with a crowd of his friends almost as wild as himself. Ah! that was the generous crowd! I was younger then, and was considered rather rosy and plump and pleasing. You might not believe it, but I really used to flirt a good deal with my customers of the first water then. Why, it was business. I loved my husband; but if I had been straight, severe and prim or sour where would the Swan be?

No, I cannot forget that night. Mr. Douglas, Mr. Cram Fennell, Mr. Jarvis McVey and Col. Ralph Forrest sat at the largest table in the room out there. They were none the better for the liquor they had drunk. They were very wild and very boastful, I must say, much as I dislike to; for brave men shouldn't boast, and every one of them was as brave as a lion.

Well, as the night grew older, my gentlemen grew wilder, and finally they got talking about women. Now, that is something I always dislike to hear discussed in a tavern; it is too delicate a subject. Women should never be spoken of there. Something is sure to be said by some one of an offensive nature, and some one is, nine times in a dozen, ready to flare up and take offense at what is said. It was the way that night. First, they spake of the great women of the world, of the young girl who left her home, over 400 years ago, in man's clothes, with her long hair cut off and the courage of a god in her soul, to save her beloved country from one of England's wicked kings. Col. Forrest did stoutly maintain that she was an inspired and simple virgin, and Mr. Cranford Douglas did as strongly assert that she was an artful hussy and a lewd minx, God bless us!

They called her "Joan the Rip"—that is, Mr. Cranford Douglas did; Col. Forrest and Mr. Jarvis McVey did call her "the sweet maid of Orleans." Then they spoke of a woman for whom "a thousand ships" were launched, and ever so many battles fought in some far away country called Troy, I think it was. Then they tore a poor woman all to pieces—who had been dead, I guess, over two thousand years—for loving more than one man. They called her a "serpent" of some river—all but Col. Forrest; they couldn't get him to say one single unkind thing about any of my sex, not even when they brought up a woman who had killed a very brutal man in a bath tub early one fine morning. He said that "is served the cuss right," and that "Charlotte was just as good as John," and Mr. Cranford Douglas, with a great big oath and a thump on the table that broke six glasses and a finger bowl, said that "she was no better than she ought to be, or than the majority of women." The colonel said that only angels were better than they ought to be.

It pained me to hear them talk, but what could I do? And besides I knew Mr. Douglas didn't mean one-half that he said. I was sure that he wasn't talking, but that the liquor was. Well, they went from one great woman to another, and at last came down to that day—that is, that time—and they spoke of the women then in the public's eye.

Mr. Douglas gave it as his opinion that there wasn't a decent woman on the stage, God bless us! But here Mr. Cram Fennell begged to differ with him, and named one whom even I—shut out from the world as I was all my life, you might say—had heard of as being one of the sweetest, loveliest, purest and best of women and actresses. Not that I care much for that sort, and not that I don't. I have no knowledge of actors, because I have never been inside of a theatre in my life. After that actress was spoken of as being all that a good woman should be, Mr. Cranford Douglas burst into the maddest and most insulting laugh it has ever been my ill fortune to listen to; and when he was asked what the laugh meant he shouted so that the horses of the gentlemen were disturbed out there under the shed:

"Why, she is the worst of the lot!"

And then a gentleman—the very handsomest gentleman I have ever seen, who had been eating a chop and quietly reading a paper at a little table by himself—got up, came over to Mr. Douglas' party, and with a very white face, which showed that his heart must have been going up and down at a dreadful rate, he told Mr. Cranford Douglas that he thought that Mr. Cranford was a blackguard and a vile liar!

I thought that I should faint. I couldn't do anything, and my Dick couldn't interfere with gentlemen. If they were every day people, now, something might be done; but these gentlemen were of the best blood in Virginia.

So Mr. Cranford says, as cool as pie:

"And whom have I the honor of listening to?"

"You wouldn't recognize me, because my father happened to be a gentleman."

"But how do I know that?" says Mr. Douglas.

"True, how should you?" replies the pale gentleman. "A gentleman always resents an insult offered to himself or friends, be the latter absent—or present, unable to resent it themselves. You have slandered to-night one of the truest women God ever kissed ere he sent out of paradise. I do not allude to Joan of Arc or Charlotte Corday, but to a woman of today; and I tell you that you are a liar and a rowdy—well dressed and educated, but still a rowdy."

I never saw anything in my life done so quickly. Mr. Cranford leaped from his chair, and before he touched the ground his open hand struck with a great force the pale gentleman's cheek.

The latter never moved. They both glared at each other. The pale gentleman said:

"That means"——

"It certainly does!" from Mr. Cranford Douglas.

"Well, I am a stranger in these parts, and if I might request any gentleman here to—to—to"——

And then Col. Forrest put his card into the pale gentleman's hand.

"That's all right, Forrest," said Mr. Cranford; "just what I would have asked you to do if I intended that your services should be required. But they won't be. I believe that the choice is mine. Here, woman," to me, "get two of those little balls in the billiard room—a white and a black. Now, sir, here is a white ball and a black. If you draw the black ball from this mug," reaching over and taking one of my silver mugs from the hook where it, with four others, always hangs for ornament, "you will pass your word of honor to dispose of yourself by shooting, hanging, drowning, poison or by stabbing at any time I may elect after the drawing. If I draw the black ball you can dispose of me. I do this because I fancy you are not a skillful swordsman."

A faint smile played under the pale gentleman's silky mustache at that.

"And I wish to take no unfair advantage, for I am considered, rightly or wrongly, the best in Virginia. You may be a good shot; but I doubt it. Draw, sir—or shall I?"

"As you please."

"Very well; you draw."

The pale gentleman drew the black ball.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Cranford Douglas, "it is midnight. One year from to-night, at one minute after 12 o'clock, you must not be in this world. You must send me word that you are dead. Here is my card. Ah, thanks." And after exchanging cards they separated, and the pale gentleman went out, after paying me twice over for the little he had eaten, with the saddest smile and the sweetest I have ever seen.

I never saw him any more.

The months flew by after that as I have never in my long life known them to fly before. My sympathies were all with the pale gentleman, I must say, for I am not one of those that like to hear men run down their mothers' sex. But Mr. Cranford Douglas was a very generous man. He spent money as if he didn't know what it was to ever want for a dollar; and in truth he didn't, for he was of a very wealthy family.

Just one year from that night Mr. Cranford and his friends were seated out there, waiting for a message from the pale gentleman. Mr. Cranford said quietly that he would wager his horse that no message would come; and Mr. Cram Fennell said that he thought the message would come, as the pale gentleman seemed to be thoroughbred. The hours went on until 12 struck. At two minutes past 12 exactly, as I am an honest woman, and just in the middle of one of Mr. Cranford's disagreeable sneers about man's honor being on a par with woman's, the voice of the pale gentleman was distinctly heard to say:

"I have kept my word."

We all looked toward the door. No one had entered. The wind wailed outside, and that was all we heard after. The party looked at each other mutely, as people do look when something is said that cannot be grasped all at once, and then with a big, round oath Mr. Cranford Douglas did accuse some one in the party of being a "ventriloquist," but they all swore in their beards that they were guilty of no trick, and so he tried to appear as if he believed that which they said. In a little while they left the Swan, and Dick and I locked up and went to bed, wondering and whispering until we fell asleep.

About a month after that, one snowy, blowy night in the wild December weather, two days before Christmas I think it was, at about 11 o'clock, when Mr. Douglas and Col. Forrest and the rest of the gentry were laughing and chatting and telling wild stories of wilder times, the door of the Swan was thrown violently open and there entered, in a whirl of snowflakes, a gentleman that looked for all the world like the cavaliers I used to see when I was a little girl long before the war came. He had on a soft, broad brimmed, low crowned hat; he was well made; he had on a great cloak and high, strong boots that came over his knees and large gloves that came over his wrists. He drew off one very slowly and warmed his delicate white hand at the great open fire, glancing round with his big gray eyes in every corner of the room and on every face at once, it seemed.

"A wild night, dame," he said to me.

"It is indeed, sir," says I. "Can I get something for you to eat and drink, sir?"

"Not just yet," he answered, kindly. "I came here to your tavern on business only."

When he said, "I came on business only," it sounded just like the farrier's hammer striking the anvil at the forge down the road. I grew very nervous. Something was in the very air that made everybody quiet. He looked at Mr. Cranford Douglas and his party as if he were trying to recognize some one of them. He then blew the melted snowflakes out of his whiskers by a peculiar movement of his mouth, as if he were trying to blow specks off his shirt front, stamped his feet, and then said to me, loud enough to be heard by all:

"You are pretty well acquainted in these parts, dame?"

"I ought to be, sir," I says, with pardonable pride. I hope, "seeing I was born here in the Swan, which my father and his kept before me."

"Perhaps you know one Mr. Cranford Douglas?"

Before I could reply Mr. Douglas arose and said rather stiffly, which I could see no earthly reason for:

"I do not think that she knows two Mr. Cranford Douglases, sir. What is your business with me?"

"So you are Mr. Cranford Douglas? Well I have a message for you, which I have brought over three thousand miles. You should have had it a month ago, sir; but England is far away, and I have just come from there to New York, from New York to you. There is your message, sir!"

Saying which he flung a letter right into Mr. Cranford Douglas' face.

"Fennell, will you oblige me by reading aloud the contents of that envelope?" said Mr. Cranford, quite calmly; but the devil was in his eyes all the same. And then Mr. Cram Fennell read:

The year is gone. In two minutes I shall be dead. WALTER MARLOWE.

"You," to the stranger, "were evidently his friend?" said Mr. Douglass.

"His dearest," was the measured reply.

"And you wish to take up his quarrel?"

A nod from the stranger.

"Very well. My friend, Col. Forrest, will wait upon any friend of yours in the morning"——

"Dame!" cried the stranger, "those little balls—the white and black—from the billiard room."

Mr. Douglas shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, "As you will."

Well, the conditions were the same as those of a year and a-month before, when the pale gentleman drew the black ball.

"Stay," said Mr. Cranford Douglas, as he was about to draw; "tell me, have you a friend to avenge you? I ask out of mere curiosity."

"I shall need no avenger. You are bound to draw the black ball."

His tones were like ice.

Mr. Cranford Douglas did draw the black ball.

With a reckless laugh he shouted:

"Well, that's hard luck! Just to think, in one year I must die! But what a year I'll live!"

"Nay, sir, you must blow your brains out here in five minutes or put a bullet through your heart. It's all one to me so you are out of the world."

"Well, if I do," roared Mr. Cranford, "may I be everlastingly roasted!"

"You cur!" said the stranger, with a contemptuous sneer. "And to think that Walter Marlowe kept faith with such a thing as you!"

Oh, the words were bitter—bitter—bitter, I understood after. I don't know how they arranged it, but they met next morning off there in the clearing, near the lake, and Mr. Cranford wounded the stranger so badly that he had to fly the country. We have never heard of Mr. Cranford since except once, and then we learned that he was in the silver mines of South America. Yes, now I do remember that some one said he went down in a diving bell, on a wager, to a wreck off the South American coast, and that some of his drunken companions cut the air tube while he was down and flung it overboard.

The poor, dear, wounded thing was carried in here by Col. Forrest and Jarvis McVey, bleeding awfully, and up to my chamber. That day, along toward night, my boy was born. I didn't think that he would live, but the doctor said that he wished he was as sure of the mother's life as he was of her boy's. She lingered on for a few days—five, I think—and then passed away. I learned, by shreds and patches, her story, partly from her ravings and partly from what she told me.

The pale gentleman was her husband. She was the actress Mr. Cranford had said was "the worst of the lot" that night. Her husband was an English gentleman, and a very fine actor. He would have been a very great one had he lived. It was lucky for Mr. Douglas that he understood her husband's play with the sword, for if they had fought with swords instead of those little balls of ivory Mr. Douglas would have been surely killed by Mr. Marlowe, for Mr. Marlowe was the best swordsman in his profession, excepting a Mr. Fechter, if I remember rightly.

Only a few knew that they were married, because they thought that it was best so for a while; for the public doesn't think so much of a married actress as of an unmarried one. That seems very funny; I don't understand that at all. Well, they used to play together in Shakespeare's plays, and her husband was bound to become the best player of the part of Prince Hamlet since Mr. Edmund Kean's day.

After Mr. Marlowe went away that night he went to his wife (they were visiting some of his friends over yonder) and told her just what had happened. She took him up north with her next day and tried to talk and reason with him, but it was of no use. Then they gave up all their engagements, gave out that they had been married for some time and went to England, his home, where his great relations lived. She thought on the way over that he had forgotten all about it, but they were only one day over there when he shot himself. It nearly killed her. She loved him so.

Women always do love their husbands when they know that their husbands' characters are not quite so strong as their own, with a sort of motherly love mixed with the wifely. I know that's the way I feel toward my poor Dick. I don't think I would have had the same feeling toward him if I knew that he didn't look up to me.

It is all so sad. I can't write any more. I would be sorry I wrote this, only that my boy must have comfortable clothes, and I am not rich enough now to do things that I would like to do since Dick died and the Swan lost its good customers.

Poor lady! if her husband had had her gray eyes, and she his soft blue ones, he would be alive today. My boy has her eyes. Here he comes!—JOHN ERNEST MCCANN in Once a Week.

Where Every Man's a Prince.

In walking about the streets of Mandalay one meets on every hand hundreds of the yellow robed, shaven headed monks. Some are smoking, some are talking with the natives, but all look very happy and content. It may not be generally known, but every man in Burmah is supposed at some period in his life to be a priest. It is so in Siam also. Hence it was that Thebaw took holy orders, so called, upon himself.—Cor. Kansas City Times.

Language of Fish.

Mr. W. A. Carter, in a recent lecture on "Marine and Fresh Water Fishes," said that fish have the power of influencing one another by sounds and action. He had observed a shoal of carp following the lead of a single one, which conducted them to a quantity of food at a considerable distance away. He had also noticed that certain fresh water fish, such as trout, were subservient to a ruler, which might be seen swimming at the head of his tribe. The same was possibly the case with some marine forms, like the herring and bass.

Why She Whisked Out of the Room.

Young Peduncle (trying to be agreeable)—So you've resigned, have you? You are not the president of the Shakerag Literary Circle any longer, but just plain Miss Kajones."

Miss Kajones—Sir!—Chicago Tribune.

At the Menagerie.

"That's the porcupine, isn't it? What an ugly looking creature!"

"Yes. It isn't what you would call an attractive animal. Still it has a great many fine points about it."—Chicago Tribune.

POLLY WANTS —!

"Cracker?" I asked. But no—a bird's disdain
Answer'd my threadbare old refrain.
And Polly murmur'd—"Wants"—then paused,
Uncertain what her want was—caused
A feather from her cage to fall
(Plucked, in a pet, from wing)—'twas all.
"Polly wants" murmur'd she again,
In sort of ruminating strain,
Scratched her head and was still again,
Like some old grandsire, weak of brain,
Gone back to childhood's pleasing strain;
And sitting, drivelling all day long,
Repeats his wants in slow sing-song,
Wishing for—shadows—not a few,
Because he has naught else to do—
Or some wise fool (provoking mirth)
Who nothing less wants than—the earth!
Till, wrought to curious mood, I saw
'Twas wise, if possible, to draw
By coaxing (scolding made her worse)
From her her wish—she spurned at force.
"If Polly tells her wish," I said,
"With sugar plums she shall be fed!"—
"If Polly tells," I whispered low,
"She shall come forth from cage and go
To walk upon the garden wall!"
But Polly grunted, "Not at all;"
Then back relapsing, scratched her head,
And "Pretty Polly wants—" she said—
A pause—I stretched a coaxing hand,
And laid a sweetmeat on her stand.
She eyed it (on one side her head)—
"Polly wants two or three," she said.

* * * * * * *

In deep disgust from Polly's feast
I turned—for I had thought, at least,
Some higher wish I should have heard
Uttered by my superior bird—
When, lo! the oracle had named
Her wish—herself a vulgar epicure proclaim'd.
So goes the world. Deny who can—
A bird's a bird—a man's a man;
And (it is due to Adam's fall)—
A grovelling creature, after all!

—Letitia Virginia Douglas in New York Herald.

AMONG THE BREAKERS.

At a pleasant family reunion in New York the sons and daughters of an old commodore of the navy were assembled at the house of a well known citizen to celebrate a domestic anniversary.

The table had been cleared, cigars lighted, and the veteran, being urged by the young ladies to spin them a sea yarn, related the following story:

It occurred, he said, soon after I entered the service, now more than forty years ago. We were just about to leave Hampton Roads on a cruise, when the captain's gig dashed alongside, and with the old skipper came a slight, girlish, fair haired boy, apparently a mere child, but dressed in the uniform at that time worn by the midshipmen of our navy.

The little fellow had been sent to sea to learn an honorable profession, because his father, since his bankruptcy, could not educate his son at home in a manner becoming his former station. He stood uncertain for a while on the quarter deck, alone, neglected, abashed, until the captain, suddenly recollecting himself, turned round and introducing him to us ended by committing Harry Broughton, as I shall call him, to my oversight, as the oldest midshipman on board.

We were soon on intimate terms, and he was so frank, generous and winning in his manners that you could not, for the life of you, escape loving the little fellow. Even the rugged old tars would do anything to please him, and the severity of the first lieutenant himself often relaxed itself when little Harry, as we all called him, had offended against some paltry rule of discipline. Always the first to turn out in a gale, never to be found skulking like some of the other youngsters from his watch, and at all times eager to volunteer on any extra duty, he gradually wound himself into the hearts of every one on board, from the landlubbers in the waist to the captain in his after cabin. If we went on shore Harry was sure to be one of our company, for he was such a favorite with strangers on account of his youth and beauty that we were always better welcomed if he was along.

We had been out nearly three years, cruising on the Pacific station, when we were ordered home, and right glad we all were to hear the news. The long, beautiful moonlights came and went like the sound of music, and a hundred gallant fellows danced away the evening watches to the lively notes of the violin.

We reached the Philippine Islands, passed the straits and at last entered the Bay of Bengal. We were all heartily tired of close confinement on shipboard, and resolved to run up the bay and visit a few of the chief stations on the coast. It was a glorious day when we first caught sight of Madras, with the sunlight playing full on its walls and minarets, the long, low beach of white sand crowned with the walls of the fort above, and a tremendous surf rolling and thundering in ahead. Every heart beat high with pleasure, and it was not a difficult matter to obtain permission to land. A party of officers, among whom were Harry and myself, resolved to make an excursion into the town.

I should have mentioned that there is no port for vessels within twenty miles of St. George's fort, and as our frigate would be compelled to stretch out and in until our return we had but little time for our adventure. We had intended when we started to leave the boats outside the surf and to land in flats which are used for passing the breakers, and which, being sewed together and without keels, are admirably fitted to resist the jerking of the surf and cannot without great difficulty be overturned. But when we neared the shore we saw that none of these native boats were at hand, and as we had but little time to lose we lay upon our oars just outside the breakers and called a council to determine what to do.

"What say you, Frank, to making a dash, and passing it at once? It will be something to talk of—eh?"

I shook my head in disapprobation as I pointed to the huge billows that raced by us, and curling over a cable's length ahead broke with noise like thunder on the beach, while the shivered wave boiled and foamed in the vortex below.

"Give way, my sea dogs, give way!" shouted the third lieutenant, coming up abreast in gallant style; "shall we dash in, Mr. Tiller?"

"It looks like a venture where one cast is death, and the other a ducking, but what say you, Broughton?"

"Oh, sir," replied the little fellow, his eyes kindling as he spoke, "they say an English man-of-war's boat passed it a few years ago, and I'm sure we can do it, too. Besides, sir, we can try it with one boat first. It isn't such a high surf, after all, and look there, sir, they're watching us from the fort."

True enough, the officers of the garrison were quizzing us already with their glasses.

I still, however, objected, feeling a strange kind of presentiment that some dreadful accident would occur if we ventured in the surf. But the national pride of our men had been touched, and the lieutenant, seeing it, wavered no longer, and shouting the order to "Give way," our crew broke into a cheer and dashed rapidly up to the gigantic breakers.

The aspect of the surf as we approached was terrible. Enormous billows rolled one after another rose like monsters, paused a moment with their white crests combing before they descended and then hurled their mass of water down into the abyss below with the noise of a mighty cataract.

Hitherto, all had been careless on board, and jests had been flying plentifully about, but every man new felt that a crisis was at hand, and accordingly the deepest silence prevailed, broken only by the noise of the oars and the quick orders of the lieutenant.

"Larboard!" shouted Tiller, waving his hand, "larboard a little more!" and riding on an enormous wave we were whirled into the heart of the surf, with two gigantic billows nearly pursuing us on our quarter. For a moment we thought the crisis passed, but all at once the wave seemed to lose its impetus, and glinting from beneath us broached us almost broadside to, while the foremost of our pursuers dashed against us and heeled us nearly over into the abyss. We were losing all command of the boat, when suddenly a voice from our colleague outside of the surf exclaimed:

"Look out, there's a shark on your quarter!" At the same instant Tiller, perceiving our danger, thundered, "Larboard, hard—ease off there, larboard harder, for God's sake, down!" but the poor coxswain, startled by the ill timed warning from the other boat, and conscious of the terrible situation in which we were, lost for a moment all command of his faculties, and before he could regain them sufficiently to obey the command of his officer a wave struck us full on our broadside, and in another instant, with a wild cry of horror, we found ourselves struggling in the surf.

When I rose to the surface I struck out boldly, but I shall never forget the sight that met my eyes. The boat was already broken in pieces and the fragments tossing about, while the crew were struggling here and there in the breakers. A poor fellow was just ahead of me, buffeting with the waves, his agonized look fixed on a huge shark that lay eyeing him just without the surf. He screamed for succor, but it was in vain. The current was gradually sweeping him nearer to his terrible enemy. The other boat ventured as near as it could, but it would have been madness to approach nearer. Suddenly he gave a quick, shrill shriek, flung his arms upward and sank. The next instant the blood red hue of the surface told the fearful cause.

As for myself, I struck desperately for the shore, and being a good swimmer as long as I could command my faculties I knew I had some chance of reaching land. I had turned in order to escape the current and find a place where the surf rolled in less frightfully, when I heard a faint cry, and saw little Harry struggling not two fathoms off. He seemed almost exhausted, and was barely able to keep his head above water.

"For the love of heaven," he cried, "Frank—here!" But as I swam towards him the noble boy exclaimed: "No! Save yourself—I'm nearly gone—am getting weak—tell mother and Fanny I died thinking of them."

"Courage!" I shouted; "I'll be there in a minute—hold on, my brave lad!" and I strained every nerve to reach him, but the current was so powerful that it baffled my efforts. One while the surf would sweep us far apart, and again dash us almost together. I saw, however, that I gradually neared the gallant little fellow.

The crew of the boat outside bent to their oars, determined at all risks to secure us, when suddenly there was a cry, "The shark! the shark!" And the huge monster shot along not twenty yards off between us and our only hope, the boat. My brain reeled as I looked. The boat was rapidly approaching, but the surf was too wild to suffer it to come near to where we were, and between us the frightful monster was sailing to and fro, waiting for the tide to sweep us out.

"I'm going, Frank; I can't stand it any longer. Oh, my poor mother and sister! God forgive me my sins," faintly said the boy.

"Hold on a minute, for heaven's sake!" I cried, for I was already within a yard or two of him.

"Hold on!" thundered the lieutenant from the boat; "we'll be there if we die for it—give way, lads, for a life, hurrah!"

But poor little Harry had held on until nature was completely worn out, and casting a wild look on all around he faintly ejaculated, "My mother, sister—oh, my God!" and then, with a convulsive jerk of his arms, sank like lead into the waters. The next moment I would have been by his side.

"Give way! Give way! Give way!" roared the lieutenant, wildly, as he waved on his men.

"For God's sake, come on quick!" I shouted as I dived.

But alas! my search was unsuccessful, and when I rose to the surface I was far away from the spot where Harry had disappeared and nearing with frightful rapidity the shark on the edge of the surf. The boat was yet too distant to promise any effective aid. I shall never forget the emotions of that instant. A sickening sensation came over me; my brain reeled, my joints grew weak and my arms seemed to refuse their duty. The monster was now nearly at my side. I could see his great fins appearing and disappearing, and almost feel the lashing of his huge tail as it beat against the waters. I gave up all my hopes of this world and all I loved, and shut my eyes upon my terrible enemy as I breathed a silent prayer for mercy to God. A moment that seemed years ensued—a moment of torture more horrible than any I ever had conceived—when a loud, sharp cry rang out just behind me, and at the same instant a coil of rope fell beside me as a voice called out in broken English, "Hold on!"

Clutching the cord mechanically, I felt myself drawn rapidly in among the breakers, while the enormous monster, perceiving he was going to be disappointed of his prey, struck the waves wildly with his tail, and dashed like lightning after me.

"In with him, hand over hand!" shouted a voice, and I felt myself jerked into one of the boats common on the coast. At the same instant a thundering cheer rung from the crew outside the surf. Forgetful of everything but my wonderful preservation I fell on my knees and thanked God I was alive.

When I looked again, I saw we were riding in upon the surf and the shark had sheered out to sea. We were soon landed, and I then learned the manner of my deliverance. Having been seen, a boat had put off to our rescue, and had already taken up several of our crew, when they discovered me struggling against the current. Had I not been engaged in endeavoring to save poor Harry I would have noticed their approach sooner. As it was, four of our crew were lost.

The poor boy, thank God, was washed ashore that same afternoon, and there was not a dry eye on the ship when they heard of his untimely end. We buried him near Madras, and so ended our battle with the surf.—True Flag.

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She—Please don't make an old maid of me, whatever you do.—Epoch.

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First Cloudlet—Yes; it's a quiet, happy life, floating around up here; but there's one thing that makes me sad.

Second Cloudlet—What's that?

First Cloudlet—To think that when I'm gone I'll not be mist.—Puck.

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