Wichita Eagle

A SUMMER PICTURE.

The farmer sat in his easy chair,
Smoking his pipe of clay.
While his hale old wife with busy care
Was clearing the dinner away;
A sweet little girl with fine blue eyes
On her grandfather's knee was catching flies.

The old man laid his hand on her head,
With a tear on his wrinkled face;
He thought how often her mother, dead,
Had sat in the self same place.
As the tears stole down from his half shut eye
"Don't smoke!" said the child "how it makes you cry."

The house dog lay stretched out on the floor,
Where the shade after noon used to steal;
The busy old wife by the open door
Was turning the spinning wheel;
And the old brass clock on the mantletree
Had plodded along to almost three.

Still the farmer sat in his easy chair,
While close to his heaving breast
The moistened brow and the cheek so fair
Of his sweet grandchild were press'd;
His head fell down on her soft hair lay;
Fast asleep were they both that summer's day.

—Charles G. Eastman.

OLD MARK HAVERLY.

He was an engineer working in the Belcher. He was noted for his grit, attention to business and superstitions. One day a comrade was passing, and Mark called him up with: "Jack, do you hear that noise—a sort of grinding sound that comes and goes? Hark! Can't you hear it now?"

"It's just like any machinery makes."

"No, no, Jack; it don't belong to the machinery; it's a voice, I tell you, from the other world. I've heard that sound for two days now, and it means death, death close at hand."

"Oil the engine, old boy, and it'll be all right."

The other passed on and went down the shaft. Mark, meanwhile, bent his ear to the machinery, and out of the indistinguishable din of a dozen sounds caught this strange noise which had such an influence upon him, heard it constantly above the clank of levers, the roar of wheels and the hiss of steam. Presently a bell sounded at his side. It was the signal from the 2,000 level to hoist the cage. He pressed the lever and the great reel began to whirl the cable from the lower depths. His eye followed the long finger of the indicator as it slowly pointed out the stations passed. The cage had almost reached the top when the horrible grinding noise, like a moan from the grave, came from the machinery at his side. The sound made his veins melt. He turned his head toward the spot, shuddering, while his hand as it clasped the lever was like a child's. The cage shot up from the shaft's mouth; he grasped the lever and threw his weight upon the break. Too late; the cage rushed into the "sheaves."

The floor of the cage became vertical as it struck the wheel. The cable stretched under the fearful strain and then snapped like a thread, and the cage fell back to the shaft's mouth. Three of its occupants had leaped upon the timbers and hung suspended; the other two had made the same leap, but their fingers slipped from the slimy timbers, made so by the long contact with the vapors from the mine, and they fell one after the other headlong down the shaft.

Meanwhile Mark had stopped his engine, resumed his coat, and staggered out of the works. On such occasions an engineer is considered discharged without notice. He actually ceases to be in the employ of the company when the cage strikes the "sheaves," and such an accident makes his discharge perpetual with every mine on the Comstock.

For the next week or two he wandered about the town like a man barely in his senses. He finally got work underground, but was oftener found somewhere about the hoisting works, near the machinery. He would at times sit for hours watching the work of those metallic giants, occasionally turning toward the mouth of the shaft with a shudder, and again bending his head to catch what he called the "death moan." His comrades said he was "a little off."

One day the writer entered into a conversation with him. His superstition had not left him. "I tell you," said he, "I've studied everything about a mine, above ground and below. You brutes who write for the press take a sneering view of everything. You laugh when I say an engine gives warning of death. You call this piece of a machinery a thing inanimate. I tell you that it has a construction in all respects like a man. It has lungs and sinews, and a big heart that throbs and pulsates. It has its fatigues from overwork. At times it whirls merrily and work seems nothing; then it groans and labors as if exhausted. We treat it as we do the sick. When its lungs get clogged with 'scale' we feed it a composition that makes it well again. It has a voice, and roars, sings, groans, laughs and sobs in turn. When I touch a lever I feel a magnetism such as flows from flesh and blood.

"The dark levels below us are full of mysteries. I learn more and more of its secrets every year. You remember how Jack Henly died. He fainted on the Ophir cage and went down the shaft. A few days before it I noticed as I worked beside him how the flame of his candle pointed directly toward him like a mariner's needle. Wherever he moved the flame followed. He didn't notice it, but I did, and it had a wavy, uncertain motion for a day or so. One day it became steady, as steady as if carved in stone. I knew the crisis was not far off. We came up on the cage; as we passed the first station the flame burned low, and at the twelve-fifty station it was almost gone. Suddenly it went out; Jack reeled back against the timbers, and was twisted under the cage at once. It was but a moment. I heard his dreadful cry ring out as his bones were crushed between the stage floor and the timbers, and his body shot down the shaft.

"Hawkins, who used to work for Joe Cowan, had the same kind of a warning. Wherever he worked a shadow kept close to him on the rock. His lantern made one shadow, but this was a deeper and darker one and had separate motions, and it seemed to get blacker every shift he worked till a blast tore away his chest. I have seen a man's light blow out, and, in a sort of will-o'-the-wisp, keep right over his head. Such a man had better leave the mines at once.

"When I worked in the Savage I used to see a shift of specters working, most generally at the foot of the incline, but sometimes in the east drift of the seventy-fifty. There was about half a dozen of 'em at work as a rule, but sometimes more. They would pick away in the face of the drift and make no sound, and pale lights burned at their sides. When the 5 o'clock whistle blew in the morning they would vanish.

"Once I saw a man sitting down on the steps of the incline. He was in my way, and I touched him on the shoulder. Heavens! how I sprang back; for there was no flesh and bones there—only a shadow, as it were. He turned round, and his face was half gone and his shoulder torn away from a blast. Blood was streaming from the wounds. He then walked down the incline, and melted into the vapors that rise from the waters of the sump. The next day John Owens slipped at that very spot, unable to hold on to the slimy timbers, and fell into the boiling water. He was cooked like a lobster.

"At times one hears strange voices. Ghostly voices call to each other from drift to drift; there are whisperings in the rocks and terrible groans in the sides of the cross cuts. In the Belcher I once heard a fearful shriek come from the winze. It echoed from drift to drift and startled everybody. I rushed to where the sound was, but there was nothing. Bill Sharon don't dare to go down the Yellow Jacket. The last time he did a troop of miners sheeted in flame followed him along the drifts to the foot of the shaft. He rushed to the cage like a madman and rang for the quick hoist. When the cage reached the top he lay on the floor insensible. He never told what it was, but I know."

Thus the poor fellow would spend hours telling of the mysterious sights and sounds he had encountered in the depths of the great lode. Sometimes he worked underground, but he always seemed discontented, even morose, because it was no longer permitted to him to grasp the lever of an engine. He felt a stain upon his reputation, and looked hopefully forward to the time when he could wipe it out.

The opportunity came. One night he came into the South Consolidated works and sat watching the machinery. Suddenly he turned to the engineer and said, "I hear the death moan on the wheels, Tom."

Had the engineer looked at Mark's face, masked in a horrible pallor, he would have indeed thought the man had heard a sob from the grave. Mark bent his head a little lower and waited. Out of the roar and rumble he heard only the "death moan," as he called it. Suddenly the bell rang out so quick and sharp that both men were startled. It was the signal of danger and the quick hoist. The wheel began to whirl until the spokes mingled in a maze. A moment later a puff of smoke drifted from the shaft's mouth, and then a shower of sparks. The mine was on fire.

The cage came whizzing to the surface, and a crowd of half naked men reeled off, blistered and half suffocated, into the dressing rooms. The whistle of the mine sent forth a cry for help, and in a few seconds more other whistles took up the cry and bellowed forth their hoarse notes, from the North Consolidated to the Belcher. Scarcely was the cage emptied when those below signaled sharply for it to come down. It shot back into the depths almost as fast as if it had been dropped. The cable touched a piece of iron near the sheaves, and from the point of contact streamed a line of sparks. Another burst of smoke came up the shaft, and a sheet of flame followed for an instant. The timbers became a mass of fire. The hoisting works went like a tinder box.

The engineer must not only bring the cage to the surface, but must stop it there. The machinery was growing hot to the touch. The cage reached the bottom; then came the signal to hoist. Just as he reversed the lever a falling timber knocked him senseless.

A dozen men sprang to the unmanned engine; but Mark was there first, and picking up the body at his feet he handed it to the nearest two men as if it had been a child and merely said, "Take him away."

A man close at his side leaned forward to grasp the lever, but he flung him back into the crowd. A flare of flames sent them all staggering away. Mark laid his hand upon the lever, the first time in five years, and grasped it with his old energy. The breath of hell was in his face. It would be a long minute and a half before the cage reached the surface, where he must prevent its dreadful ascent into the "sheaves." His hand held the lives of a dozen men. He faced the fire like a salamander. A cheer went up, and the folds of red smoke covered him from sight.

The cage reached the shaft's mouth full of men, most of them insensible as they were dragged out. As Mark threw the lever back to its place and stopped the engine the flames closed about him. The superintendent called out:

"One thousand dollars to the man who saves him!"

A dozen brave men had already started. It was too late; the flames had overwhelmed him. Three days later the men whose lives he had saved dug among the ruins. Lying by the engine they found his charred remains, and stood by them a while with uncovered heads. They bore away the remains of Mark Haverly in a box, and the next day 3,000 mourners walked behind the coffin. As they pressed down the earth over his grave and threw the last sprig of green down upon it, one of the pall bearers remarked, "There was good leather in that man."—Sam Davis' Collected Sketches.

Presents a Man May Buy.

Among the gifts permissible for a man to offer a young or married woman of his acquaintance to whom perhaps he is indebted for hospitalities accepted is a fur rug, and it may be said that scarcely anything within the range of his giving will better please "milady." She sighs first and always for a lion's skin, the most superb of rugs, and the barbaric taste of the modern belle likes the great head of the king of beasts arranged in size and effect as nearly like life as possible. This rug she chooses for her morning room, and for her East India parlor the sleek, glossy skin of the tiger, with its graceful, catlike head and greenish eye, delights her.

For her dainty bedroom, with its frescoes of the sun god's chariot rolling in on the pink morning clouds attended by the daughters of the dawn, its Watteau hangings and its carpet of white roses, a pair of virgin white rugs, made from the long, spotless and fluffy fleece of the Iceland sheep, will bring joy to her heart. One she will put before the brass bedstead for the first touch of the foot in the morning, and the other she will fling down before the dressing table, where daily the altar incense of the toilet is burned. The chatelaine of today revels in rugs—she cannot have too many of them.—New York Times.

Cobras and the Missionary.

A curious missionary story comes from the Madras direction. A Mr. Hinder writes a long account of his sojourn with some other missionaries at Southal, in a bungalow infested with snakes. One cobra was killed, and for the next fortnight the missionaries were happy and unconcerned, preaching daily to the sick and making sweet music with the flute, violin and cornet.

Another cobra's skin was found six feet from Mr. Hinder's bed, whereupon he writes: "How little one knows the enemies that surround us! How helpless we are before these foes! Why, we were all asleep, and the cobra going about our bed skinning herself."—Pall Mall Gazette.

The Ancients and Tobacco.

Some religious journals are printing a paragraph to the effect that the late Professor Hitchcock, of this city, held that tobacco was known to the ancients and that its name was derived from Bacchus, the god of wine. The weed was offered to Bacchus as a votive offering, and as the native case of Bacchus in Greek is "To Baccho," the narcotic gradually got that name. Of course any scholar will at once see that Dr. Hitchcock was too good a Grecian to have fathered such an absurd etymology.

As a matter of fact, the late President Hitchcock, of Amherst, made the suggestion in question as a bit of pleasantry in a humorous book which he once published. The ancients didn't have the good for—we mean of course the ancients didn't indulge in the vice of using tobacco, though they probably would if they had known about it. For the ancients were rare old boys in their time, and were up to all the mischief that was going.—New York Tribune.

VIVIEN.

About her lissom limbs the samite clings,
And in her hair I see the snake of gold;
I meet her glances sweet and soft and bold,
And in mine ear her soft love song she sings;
Low at my feet her trustless trust she flings.
I know her well; 'tis she who, fold on fold,
In days long gone, round Merlin, wise and old,
Wrapped all her subtle charms, sweet threatenings,
And tears and smiles. Dead? Vivien dead? Why,
You and I, and all men, for her sake
Daily forget ourselves, and every day
Do hear the cry, O fool! She will not die
While there is still in man a heart to ache,
A brain to turn, a soul to lead astray.

—Carlotta Perry in Frank Leslie's Monthly.

A NYMPH OF FIRE.

Many years ago, before the Turk—may the earth swallow him and oblivion his memory—came into our fair country, when all our people worshiped the blessed Christ, there stood upon the slopes of Ararat, apart from all other habitations, a little cottage nestling in flowers and embowered by the trees of the forest.

Its inhabitants were an old man of Persian face and priestly dress and a young girl of whose appearance little was known, for although most unmaidenly she roamed the wooded slopes of the mountains, she nevertheless fled from the presence of our young Armenian hunters more swiftly than the deer which they there pursued. The women of our country, however, if they do differ in reserve from their western kinswomen, still have their full share of curiosity, and are as artful as any in satisfying it. Thus they soon reported, with unconscious malice, that the girl shunned comparison with our dark eyed country maidens, with their ripened color and raven hair, because her face possessed no beauty, but was pale as marble, and that the wave of gold which the hunters described as following her flight was a mass of unbound hair of the reddest sort!

Soon whispers spread the rumor that this old man and his daughter were heathen "Gragabashd"—as in our tongue we call those whom you more pleasingly denominate Guebers or fire worshipers.

Why he had chosen Ararat for his home remained a mystery, yet there in the shadow of that holy mount he lived and practiced his dark rites. Surely no man but a stony hearted Gueber could dwell in such a favored spot and remain infidel. Above him, far in the blue deep of heaven, pointing with its snowy finger higher and still higher, until it would seem that the strongest eye must fail to follow its glittering index, and that the stiffest neck must bow in awe of the Creator, rose the grand old peak of Ararat. Down through the green of the tree tops its white splendor gleamed upon the cottage of the Persian. Yet he looked not up, save to salute the sun in his meridian glory.

Here, in the very center of the world, perchance on the very spot where the smoke of the first sacrifice of a purified world arose to Noah's God, he made his unholy adorations to the same false deity whom the wicked worshiped before the avenging deluge swept them away. Even when his god of a day was passing away in the evening and the shadows of the sacred mountain, immutable, eternal, fell upon his home—even then unholy prayers and chantings were heard by the chance passer by, who crossed himself and hurried on in terror. None dared put themselves in reach of his conjurations and all shunned the neighborhood.

Then the war with our Persian oppressors came on, and the righteously indignant Armenians would have risen and put him and his daughter to death, and sacrificed his cottage to his god of fire, had they not been restrained by the only friend the old Persian could count in all the valley, young Vahan, the bravest youth of the realm, the son of our leader, Vartan.

I said that Prince Vahan was a friend of the Persian; he was more truthfully the lover of his daughter. One day before the outbreak of the war he had been hunting on the slopes of Ararat. His thoughts had wandered from the chase, and plunged in reverie he had allowed his horse to drop into a slow and noiseless walk over the thick carpet of fallen leaves, the work of all the centuries since the flood. Suddenly he heard a voice, "What shall I suffer to rid my father of his terrible curse?" Turning toward the place whence came the voice he beheld standing underneath a pine on a brook's side, with hands uplifted to a ray of sunlight which streamed down through the green roof above, a being who seemed to Vahan's deluded eyes the ideal of all beauty, purity and truth.

"Oh, spirit of the earth, or air, or light or water, for thou seemest to be the soul of all," he cried; "oh, dryad of the pine, or naiad of the brook, or sylph of the sunbeam, what can Vahan do to reverence, or if thou perchance be mortal, to aid thee?"

Perhaps it was his noble face and earnest mien as well as poetic language—for he had been reared in Athens—that assured her that he was not of the rough peasant lads from whom she had often fled, or perchance the beautiful wisgh had already begun to practice her evil enchantments; be this as it may, she listened to his words and told her name and condition.

Thenceforth Vahan spent his days in hunting and his nights in dreaming of the maiden whom he daily met by the brook under the great pine on the mountain side. His dreams were of a maiden fair and holy featured as the Virgin, and rich in a flood of hair, fine as though spun of sunbeams and soft as Magdalen's locks that wiped the feet of our Lord.

Oh, the craft of a wicked woman! How she seemed to love him! Then the Persian war began. How her tenderness increased! The youth of Armenia hastened with ardor to the frontier, but Vahan still wasted his days in the chase of love. His parents upbraided him, his companions entreated, the old men reminded him of his former deeds and the present need of his valor to lead the Armenians to victory; but still he would not go. Often he said, "I will go to-morrow;" but to-morrow found him still delaying by the brook, and again to-morrow found him on his steed pricking fast to the mountain cottage, earnestly resolved to take that farewell embrace which another to-morrow again renewed. Perhaps at that time the girl really loved Vahan, and wished him safe from the dangers of war; yet the outcome seems to indicate that love for her fellow countrymen, the Persian Guebers, prompted her allurements to delay the departure of the young Armenian hero, the flower of the army.

Entreaties of parents and friends at last prevailed, and Vahan departed to the war. Before his coming the Persians had been almost uniformly victorious, but now the bravery and generalship of the new leader aroused the despairing Armenians to renewed courage, and the tide of victory was turned.

Meanwhile spies had discovered in the mountain cottage the cause of the prince's long delay. Thenceforth it was continually watched. One night a man was captured while stealthily departing from the place. His speech and brave attempt to outrun the horsemen proved him to be one of the swift footed Persian couriers. He carried a message from the old Persian fire worshiper, containing evidence of the most diabolical treachery, the revelation of all of Vahan's military plans, which, in his confidence and enthusiasm, he must have revealed to the old man. Last of all there was a plot for luring the prince into ambush.

The courier was slain at once, and the old man and his daughter dragged before the court of Armenia. The father confessed everything, and with erect form and flashing eyes even boasted of the partial success of his plans. But he begged piteously for the life of his daughter, and said that she knew nothing of the plan for Vahan's betrayal, and that even he loved the young man so well that he had planned capture where death would have been more easily accomplished. So great was the people's love for their prince that their rage knew no bounds. The old man was condemned to death by fire. He stood in the midst of the flames more like a martyr than the accursed sorcerer that he was, and cried as the fire raged about him, "O spirit of fire! I thank thee that my sin against thee is purified in thine embraces!"

Such was the force of the father's entreaties, and such was the saintly beauty of her own pure face, that some would have freed the maiden. But many a beauty among the court ladies, on whom Vahan had ever looked with disdain, could scarce restrain her nails from plowing that face, whose crime in her eyes was not that it had caused Armenia the loss of many victories, but that it had won the love of Vahan. She was condemned to the milder death by the sword, though many thought her a viler magician than her father, so wickedly fair was her enchantment of beauty, for our priests tell us, in the words of the Holy Book, that the devil often appears as an angel of light.

While she lay in prison, awaiting execution, Vahan heard of her condition. Cursing her judges and betrayers, he took horse for the capital. He rode like the wind, night and day, and even his Koordish mare, that, under a forayer, had journeyed for three days without food or rest, whose limbs were like marble in their firmness, dropped dead on the second morning. Four horses died beneath the furious rider, and still he came too late.

On the morning of his arrival the maiden had been brought into the public square, and taken upon the platform constructed in its center. None of the spectators had ever seen so beautiful a being. Down from her queenly head, about the fairest of faces and loveliest of forms, rippling even to her feet, fell the richness of her hair, soft and silken as the spider's thread, and golden as the sunlight. This glorious witchery the executioner severed first to allow the free sweep of his sword. The vindictive queen, Vahan's mother, was by her side, and gathered up the locks as they fell. Then she scattered them to the winds, and laid a curse upon them, saying: "O gleaming locks of the Fire Witch, that like a marsh light would have lured my son to destruction, be ye scattered to the four corners of the world, to be a witness to Armenian and to Persian, to Christian and to unbeliever, of the wickedness of this enchantress! A curse be on you, that ye rest not forever, either upon the earth or sea or in the heaven, that the memory of her treachery may ever remain!"

As she ended down the valley in the distance came Vahan, urging a wearied steed and crying, "Innocent! innocent!" But the executioner was deaf to all commands save the queen's, and blind to all beauty, even that of a saint, for saint the maiden surely seemed, with the shorn locks of gold surrounding her sorrowful face as the halo hovers over the weeping Mother Mary. The great two handed sword whistled through the air, and the enchantress was no more. The queen and all that were there fled like cowards from the frantic curses of Vahan. All alone did he mourn over her body, and then departed to throw away his life in desperate battle with the Persians. He and Vartan, his father, perished on the day when Armenia was freed.

Still, over the hills and valleys, forests and streams, float the silken hairs on which the curse was laid. They rest not, neither on the earth below nor in the heaven above, but float forever between them, a memorial to all the world of the saint like enchantress, and the little Armenian children say, as they see the long golden threads stretching over the meadows in motionless suspense, "There floats the Voki-Vosdein, the spirit spider thread that would have caught Vahan in its meshes!"

But in Persia they revere the old man and his daughter as patriots and martyrs, and look on the gossamer as a memorial of that virtue which triumphs over love and death itself.

Yet, however that may be, whether she was angel or fiendish enchantress, the Armenians to this day cannot abide red hair.—Marion M. Miller in Short Stories.

Expensive Playgoing.

Recently a Bavarian paper gave an impressive account of the experience of an English family at Oberammergau. The worthy paterfamilias appears to have telegraphed from Paris for lodgings and tickets for the play. He received in reply a promise of both. He came and stopped for two days, and was then presented with a bill amounting to 437 marks, or nearly £22, and made up of items like these: Sitting room, three days, 60 marks; two bedrooms with six beds, 180 marks; bed for courier, 15 marks; bed for maid, 21 marks; board for six persons, two days, 72 marks; twelve dinners, at 4 marks, 48 marks; fire and lights, 12 marks; board for courier and maid, 16 marks, and so on.

On the top of this the maid fell ill through sleeping in a damp bed, and her complaint was pronounced to be typhus, and this resulted in another claim for 500 marks—I presume as compensation for the infection. Finally, having thus paid nearly 1,000 marks for their two days' fun, the family never got any tickets and left without seeing the play.

Professor Orton, while urging the imperative necessity of taking action to restrict the wasteful use of natural gas, admits that even the strictest regulations cannot prevent the exhaustion of the supply in a few years.

Receipt for Furniture Varnish.

A good shellac varnish for furniture on floors is given by a French cabinet maker: Five pounds of pale shellac, one ounce of mastic and five or six pints of alcohol. Dissolve in the cold to prevent the evaporation of the alcohol, stirring constantly.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were fond of athletic sports, such as running, boxing and wrestling, and these gave them the strong, healthy and vigorous bodies which are seen in their famous sculptures preserved in the museums and galleries of modern times.

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

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Let Them Know If You Are Coming.

A prompt response is an urgent duty in the case of receiving an invitation. It is only justice to the friend who gives you an invitation that you let her know at once whether or not it is accepted by you. I once invited a large company of friends to attend an evening entertainment and spend the night at my home. I lived in the country and at such a distance from supplies as to render such an invitation an almost heroic act of hospitality.

My invited guests had abundant opportunities of understanding the difficulties of my situation, and I had asked for a response, yet only one of the five families included in the invitation had the grace to reply. Do you think I felt very amiable as I prepared lodgings and table for these good people and awaited in suspense their possible arrival?—West Shore.

Mining Accidents.

Mr. W. Fairley, mining engineer, of Rugeley, has compiled from the reports of her majesty's inspectors of mines a table showing the number and ratio of deaths from mining accidents in Great Britain from 1851 to 1889, those occurring in Ireland being included since 1872. In the first named year the deaths numbered 984, and the persons employed 216,217, or a ratio of 1 in 219. In 1889 1,034 persons lost their lives, out of a total of 563,735 men employed, the ratio thus being 1 in 530. The casualties in 1889 were made up as follows: By explosions, 138; by falls of roofs and sides, 465; by miscellaneous accidents, 401. The average ratio of deaths throughout the period 1851-1889 is estimated to be 1 in 369.—Philadelphia Ledger.

A Just Rebuke.

A tourist had taken up his lodgings at an inn which did not quite come up to his expectations, and happening to sit at the dinner table next to a strange lady he addressed her as follows:

"Have you been long imprisoned in this stable?"

"I am not a prisoner, though I have been here a long time, for I am the mistress of this establishment and have to feed the animals."—London Tid-Bits.

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