GEMS IN VERSE.

The Fault of the Age.

The fault of the age is a mad endeavor
To leap to heights that were made to climb.
By a burst of strength, of a thought most clever,
We plan to forestall and outwit Time.

We scorn to wait for the thing worth having.
We want high noon at the day's dim dawn.
We find no pleasure in toiling and saving,
As our forefathers did in the old times gone.

We crave the gain, but despise the getting;
We want wealth—not as reward, but dower—
And the strength that is wasted in useless fretting
Would fell a forest or build a tower.

To covet the prize, yet to shrink from the winning;
To thirst for glory, yet fear to fight—
Why, what can it lead to at last but sinning,
To mental languor and moral blight?

Better the old slow way of striving,
And counting small gains when the year is done,
Than to use our force and our strength contriving,
And to grasp for pleasure we have not won.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Molasses Catches Flies.

My Uncle Ephraim was a man who did not live in vain,
And yet why he succeeded so I never could explain;
By nature he was not endowed with wit to a degree,
But folks allowed there nowhere lived a better man than he;
He started poor, but soon got rich; he went to congress then,
And held that post of honor long against much brainier men.
He never made a famous speech nor did a thing of note,
And yet the praise of Uncle Eph welled up from every throat.

Now father was a smarter man, and yet he never won
Such wealth and fame as Uncle Eph, "the deestrik's favorite son."
He had "convictions," and he was not loath to speak his mind—
He went his way and said his say as he might be inclined.
Yes, he was brainy; yet his life was hardly a success—
He was too honest and too smart for this vain world, I guess.
At any rate I wondered he was unsuccessful when
My Uncle Eph, a duller man, was so revered of men.

When Uncle Eph was dying, he called me to his bed,
And in a tone of confidence inviolate he said:
"Dear Willyum, ere I seek repose in yonder blissful sphere,
I fain would breathe a secret in your adolescent ear.
Strive not to hew your way through life—it really doesn't pay.
Be sure the salve of flattery soaps all you do and say.
Herein the only royal road to fame and fortune lies,
Put not your trust in vinegar—molasses catches flies."
—Eugene Field.

Despair.

Oh, I am sick at heart. The eye of day,
The insistent summer sun, seems pitiless,
Shining in all the barren crevices
Of weary life, leaving no shade, no dark,
Where I may dream that hidden waters lie,
As pitiless as to some shipwrecked man,
Who, gazing from his narrow shoal of sand
On the wide, unspecked round of blue and blue,
Sees that full light is errorless despair.
The insects' hum that slurs the silent dark
Startles and seems to cheat me, as the tread
Of coming footsteps cheats the midnight watcher
Who holds her heart and waits to hear them pause,
And hears them never pause, but pass and die.
Music sweeps by me as a messenger
Carrying a message that is not for me.
The very sameness of the hills and sky
Is obduracy, and the lingering hours
Wait round me dumbly, like superfluous slaves,
To whom I want naught but the secret news
They are forbid to tell.
—George Eliot.

A Pagan's Prayer.

O Mother, I have loved thee without fear,
And looked upon the mystery of change,
Since first a child, upon the closing year,
I saw the snowflakes fall and whispered, "Strange."

Because in these pale borderlands of fate
Grief hath companioned me, I have not quailed,
And when love passed into the outer strait
I have not faltered, and thou hast not failed.

For I have lifted up my heart to thee,
And thou hast ever hearkened and drawn near,
And bowed thy shining face down over me
Till I could hear thee as the hill flowers hear.

And I have cried to thee in lonely need,
Being but a child of thine bereft and wrung,
Till all the rivers in the hills gave heed,
And the great hill winds in thy holy tongue—

That ancient incommunicable speech
The April stars and autumn sunsets know—
Soothed me and calmed with solace beyond reach
Of human ken, mysterious and low.

Then in that day when the last snow shall come
And chill the fair round world within its fold,
Leave me not friendless in the gathering gloom,
But gird thine arms about me as of old.

With sleep once more in thy compassionate hands,
Croon me a murmur as of many rills
When I would rove the crimson valley lands,
With all my vanished comrades of the hills.

When that great storm out of the dark shall drive
And blur the sun and bugle my release,
Let not thy weary earthling faint nor strive,
Faring beyond the tumult to thy peace.
—Bliss Carman.

Her Day.

He was a mighty, rolling river;
She was a little, rippling rill;
He was a mountain naught could shiver;
She was a tiny, shifting hill.

He was a lion, loudly roaring;
She was a lambkin, born to love;
He was an eagle, proudly soaring;
She was a gentle, cooing dove.

He was a sturdy oak, defiant;
She was a slender, clinging vine;
He was a brave and brawny giant;
She was a wee thing feminine.

Ah, but the day when they went shopping
She was the one who took the lead;
She was the earth, so far o'ertopping
Hi'n that he seemed a mustard seed!
—Washington Post.

A Sunset.

A single sunset hath more loveliness
Than all the boasted palaces kings possess.
Take the rare moment when the large sun sinks
Behind far hills and the mysterious brinks,
Then Nature revels in a glorious mood
And shows her powers as if to shame our brood.
—Clarence A. Buskirk.

Success.

Those who succeed will always have their crown,
While thousands just as noble, and who strive
As eagerly to win the self same boon,
Find at the end an ignominious grave.
They sink 'mid sneers and slander into death,
Or die forgotten in oblivion's night.
—Walter Malone.

He that respects himself is safe from others.
He wears a coat of mail that none can pierce.
—Longfellow.

The shah of Persia carefully treasures an heirloom in the shape of a small cube of gold literally covered with oriental letters and characters. It is said to have fallen from heaven during Mohammed's time.

Enough diamonds to load two large coal trains and having a total weight of 50,000,000 carats and valuation of $350,000,000, have been taken out of the Cape diamond fields since their discovery in 1867.

Plants breathe through the stomata or breathing pores in the leaves. In case the plant or tree is of the leafless variety the stem, which is also provided with stomata, performs the office of breathing.

SOME ODD STORIES.

INTERESTING TALES OF ADVENTURE ON SEA AND LAND.

A Romantic Story of the Lost Marmaton. True Love Befriended by Fate—The Burning Ship—Blown Up at Sea.

[Copyright, 1893, by American Press Association.]

I was a passenger on the full rigged American ship Marmaton that sailed from Hong-Kong, with a cargo of teas, bound for New York, which port the ill fated craft was destined never to reach. Jasper Hume, a hard headed, obstinate old tar, was master of the Marmaton, and his daughter, a charming girl of 18, was his companion. It did not take me long to find out that Lefa Hume was engaged to a wealthy New Yorker, a man of middle age whom she simply detested, but as she was a dutiful daughter, and her father was anxious for the match, she really intended to sacrifice herself.

I took an interest in Lefa, and as the captain made me quite at home in his cabin it was not long before she told me she was sorry the return voyage had begun. I discovered she regarded with absolute dread the termination of the voyage, for it was agreed she should be married within a month after arriving in New York.

AN ENRAGED CAPTAIN.

On board the Marmaton was a young American who had shipped as common sailor for the avowed purpose of working his way back to the United States. He was a handsome and manly young fellow, and I could not help thinking him out of his sphere, for surprising as it may seem, he bore the unmistakable stamp of the gentleman. His name was Hubert West.

I know not what first attracted Lefa's attention to West, but we were not long out of Hong-Kong before she had seen him and evinced an interest in him. One day she found a chance to speak to him, and, despite his position as common sailor, she improved the opportunity. The girl was utterly artless, and although she was sure her father would be displeased if he knew of it she did not understand why she should not talk to any of the seamen she fancied to converse with.

By the time we reached the straits of Sunda the girl was secretly in love with West, and I had begun to feel it my duty to give the captain a quiet tip, when of a sudden the old skipper discovered how matters stood. I believe he came upon West and Lefa as they stood conversing in some secluded nook and overheard what they were saying.

Then there was a fearful row. It must be the presuming young man was making love to the girl, else even a man of Captain Hume's peppery temper would not have been so enraged. He said some pretty savage things to West, and later I heard him storming at Lefa in the cabin, while she sobbed, but made no reply. He told the young sailor to take care not to speak to the girl again unless he was anxious to lay in the hold for a good portion of the voyage.

Somehow this affair turned my sympathies in favor of West, who bore himself quietly through it all, without showing any signs of cringing. More than ever he showed the gentleman in his makeup, and I fell to wondering what his history could be. As a result I deliberately cultivated him and sought to draw him out. He proved cultured, educated, able to speak five languages fluently, but I could not get him to talk of himself, and I finally gave up the attempt.

We were well on our way across the Indian ocean when a terrible discovery was made. The Marmaton was on fire! At first it was thought we might hold the flames in check or subdue them, but they made rapid headway, and it was not long before all realized the ship was doomed. Still we fought to the last gasp, hoping to sight a sail, having hoisted signals of distress.

No sail appeared, and at length the despairing skipper came hurriedly to me, his stern face pallid.

"We must abandon the ship immediately," he cautiously declared. "It is not generally known, but I have a large amount of gunpowder aboard, and the fire is getting dangerously near it. I will lower you and Lefa in the dingy, which is a mere cockleshell, and you must look after her until we pick you up with one of the other boats. I want to get her beyond danger without delay."

This plan was swiftly carried out. As we entered the little boat I saw Lefa glance toward West, who was working at the long boat with other sailors. A moment later we were lowered to the water, and then I pulled from the ship.

It must be Captain Hume was not aware how close the fire had approached to the powder, for barely had we reached a fair distance from the ship before a terrible explosion took place. Smoke, flames and timbers shot into the air. I was hurled or fell to the bottom of the dingy, which rocked madly on the boiling water, and when I looked toward the Marmaton the shattered hulk was sinking from view.

For the moment, I thought every man aboard the ship had perished, and I was filled with the greatest horror by the appalling tragedy. Lefa sat dazed and speechless, staring like one turned to stone.

Then came a cry, and we saw a man battling with the waves. It was Captain Hume, who in some marvelous way had escaped instant death. But he was on the point of sinking, and we were some distance away—too far to reach him in time.

All at once we saw another who was swimming toward the drowning skipper. It was West, and he reached the captain in time to support him until I could pull the dingy to the spot. Then I assisted both men into the little boat, which loaded it to its full capacity.

The captain had been injured, but West was not even scratched. Neither man could tell how he escaped death in the explosion, and what made their escape seem the more astounding was the fact that not another living person of all aboard the ship was to be seen. The sailors had all met instant annihilation.

It looked as if our fate might be one of starvation, horrible to contemplate, but seven hours later we were picked up by the English bark Grantham, bound from Calcutta to Melbourne. We were treated with the greatest kindness, and Captain Hume, who was suffering from the shock and his injuries, received the best of care.

Fortune favored us in Melbourne, for Hume came upon an old skipper whom he knew, and we procured passage on the American merchantman Clara Reeves, bound for Baltimore. And, what was most surprising, the captain saw that Hubert West went along as passenger, not as sailor. He had not forgotten he was indebted to the young man for his life.

Lefa did not marry the wealthy New Yorker after all. The engagement was dissolved by mutual agreement, and she married young West, who proved to be the son of wealthy parents who had become antagonized against him for some reason, causing him to desert his home and wander over the world. He is today a prosperous business man, and Lefa is a happy wife and mother. I have heard Captain Hume say he had no real regrets for the termination of his last and as it is generally regarded most disastrous voyage.

Rough on the Cow.

Joe Springer and Dave Mowbry are neighbors who live in a very small and very sleepy New Jersey village. Springer owns a cow that he pastures in the streets, much to the disgust of everybody in the vicinity, as she has a habit of wandering into gardens and other inclosures where she has no business to trespass. Many complaints were made, but as there was no pound in the vicinity complaints made no impression on the owner of the cow.

One evening Springer came upon Mowbry, who was just driving the cow from his barn.

"I was looking for her," observed Springer.

"Well, you had better look for her!" excitedly declared Mowbry. "I put half a barrel of meal into that barn this morning, and there isn't any of it there now!"

"Wh-at?" shouted the owner of the cow, his eyes bulging as he fancied the animal's sides were distended in a suspicious manner. "Great ginger! What'll I do?"

"I don't know what you'll do," retorted the other, retiring into the barn.

Springer was frightened, for the cow was valuable, and he did not want to lose her. If she lay down, he believed she would never get up again, so all that long night he drove the poor cow up and down the streets, not allowing her to drink or rest. When morning came, Dave Mowbry was the first man to greet Springer.

"Good morning," he said, a twinkle in his eyes. "You're starting out early with your cow, neighbor."

"Early!" groaned the tired man. "Why, I've been driving her around all night long!"

"What have you been doing that for?"

"So she wouldn't lay down and die. I had to keep her going to work off the meal she ate."

"Meal? What meal?"

"The half a barrel of meal you left in your barn yesterday morning."

Mowbry pretended to be astonished. "Why, she didn't eat that meal!"

"She didn't?" gasped Springer. "Then what'd you mean by saying so?"

"I never said anything of the kind. I said there wasn't any of it there when I drove the cow out of the barn. I moved the barrel into the shed two hours before your cow got into my barn. She hasn't eaten any of my meal."

Springer was so furious he wanted to fight at first, but he cooled down in time and drove his cow sorrowfully homeward. That experience must have taught him a lesson, for he has not allowed the cow free run of the streets since. But now, sad to relate, Springer and Mowbry never speak as they pass by.

A Sailor's Mistake.

A queer smile played over the face of the old sailor, who happened to be in a reminiscent mood. Having lighted his pipe, he said:

"I shall never forget a little thing that happened on my first whaling voyage. I was a youngster, big and strong, it is true, but no more than an overgrown boy, and I had thought it would be a fine thing to make a voyage in a whaler. I went before the mast, and a pretty rough time I had of it, as I was the greenest land lubber the crew had ever seen. I stood it so well the men had about tired of their fun by the time we reached the northern seas and I had begun to think myself quite a seaman. Then something occurred that made me the sport of the ship until she reached port and I left her.

"I was off duty and asleep in my bunk when, all at once, I was aroused by a wild, wailing cry, followed by a terrible thumping and the rushing tread of feet on deck. In an instant I was up, a feeling of terror running over me, for my thought was that some terrible accident had happened to the ship. Rushing to the deck, I was convinced I had good reasons for my fears, as the sailors were crowding pellmell into the boats. I did not lose any time in attempting to find a place among them, fully believing the ship would go down in a few minutes. But the boats were filled, and not one of them would take me. Overcome with terror, I cried:

"'What shall I do? Don't leave me here to drown!'

"But they pulled away without paying the least attention to my frantic appeals, and I might have thrown myself overboard if I hadn't felt a hand on my shoulder and heard a derisive voice say:

"'Steady, greeny. What's the matter with ye?'

"And there at my side was an old sailor who seemed as cool as an iceberg.

"'The ship is sinking!' I gasped.

"He burst into a roar of laughter, and it was five minutes before he could explain that a whale had been harpooned, and the ship signaled by a flag, at sight of which the lookout had shouted, 'A fall!' and the men, rushing to the boats, had stamped on deck to arouse everybody.

"Well, you can imagine I suffered the rest of the cruise! I was not given an hour's peace, except when I was sleeping, and my satisfaction was unlimited when I put foot on shore again. I was not the first landsman to be fooled in that way, all the same."
WILLIAM G. PATTEN.

A Plain Man.

Hungry Higgins—They is two things I never wear, winter nor summer.

Weary Watkins—Wot air they?

"Well, one is a sock"—

"And the other?"

"T'other sock, of course."—Indianapolis Journal.

The blood of the arctic explorer remains at a normal temperature though he breathes air that will freeze mercury, and in India, where the temperature of the air is 115 to 120 above zero, the temperature of the blood is still 98 degrees F.

Lincoln's Laughter.

He had a great laugh—a high, musical tenor—and when he had listened to or told a story which particularly pleased him he would walk up and down the room, with one hand on the small of his back and the other rubbing his hair in all directions, and make things ring with laughter.

Lincoln has great fame as a story teller, and yet the truth isn't half told. First and last, he told thousands and thousands of stories. He was a wellspring of anecdote. Yet, under all his humor and all his laughter he was tender, sensitive, romantic, oftentimes sad. He appeared hard and practical, and yet no man ever lived who needed and craved sympathy more than Lincoln. He was strongly social in his nature and liked people rather than places. Like all men of the highest courage, fearing nobody, he hated none. He would oppose a man to the death, but would never hate him.—Senator Voorhees in Kansas City Times.

The Oddest Collector of All.

Philadelphia possesses a collector of horseshoes, Boston a gatherer of bricks, New Orleans a collector of sugar samples, Louisville a gatherer of sample flasks of whisky, but Nebraska beats them all. She boasts of a man who takes locks of hair shaved from the heads of noted criminals which he labels and indexes with great care.—Kate Field's Washington.

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Also, received ex Australia, 2600 asst'd **Elect. Lamps,** Hose, Butcher Knives, Carvers, Carriage Gloss Paint, Sulphur Bellows, Scissors, Shoe, Paint and Varnish Brushes; Buckles, Picture Cord, Furniture Nails, Tape Measures, Jennings Bits, Yale Padlocks, Oilers, galv'd Swivels, White Shellac, Gold Leaf, Leather Washers, and at last our fine assmt. of Wostenholm **Pocket Knives** and **Razors** has got here.

We were almost out of those fine swing Razor Strops, but have a new lot this steamer. We have a full line of **Electrical Goods,** and can wire houses for Electric Lights on short notice. Now is the time to leave your order for wiring, as in a few months the current for lights can be furnished and then everyone will want lights at once, and those whose houses are wired will of course get lights first.

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