

SKETCHES FROM LIFE

A TRIO OF REMARKABLE ADVENTURES AND INCIDENTS.

The Strange Old Fisherman Who Looked Like a Pious Pirate—How He Was Punished and Was Struck by Lightning. The Withered Hand.

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Last summer I spent several weeks at a pleasant hotel in a quiet town down on the Maine coast, and there I made the acquaintance of a great many "characters," not a few of whom would have furnished good material for a novelist. The one who attracted me most among them all was an old fisherman known as Sandy Griggs, a man who was rough as a burr, weather-tanned and stern proof, with the voice and features of a pugilist and the piety of a monk. In all my life I never encountered a greater human paradox, for the man's character was diametrically opposite to what any character reader or playwright would have supposed it to be. He attended church faithfully every Sunday and spoke and prayed at Tuesday evening prayer meetings. He never tried to join in any of the singing, but I am certain it was his good sense that caused him to refrain, as he must have known his voice was harsh and unmusical as the roar of a mill, and there was certainly no "music in his soul." Slaves were such a man is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils and is not to be trusted, but I found Sandy was a square and honest as the level of the sea and no one dreamed of thinking him hypocritical. The fisherman and sailors themselves could swear like cowboys, and it seemed strange that such a fierce-looking fellow as old Sandy should never utter language that was otherwise than calm and placid. "Ah! but he swears like a fisherman," said one, to whom I spoke of the old fisherman. "That was a time when Sandy carried a knife in that belt of his, and he was ready enough to use it. He had a lot of ketchin' little boys on girls on skerin' 'em out of their senses with flourishin' the knife an' swearin' he was goin' to cut their throats. An' when Bill Jones tried to have him arrested the sheriff got the knife in his shoulder, an' Bill Jones' barn was burnt that night. Swear! Why, Sandy'd swear the back off



BY A SKETCHING STROKE. An' he'll know he's a hound! Well, now he's just a fish! What changed him? Did you ever notice that right hand of his? That's it. If you kin get him to talkin', just as 'bout 'bout it. He'll tell you a story—yes, he will!"

I had noticed Sandy's right hand the first time I saw him, for it was certain to attract the gaze and wonder of any one whose eyes fell upon it. It was black, as if scorched and seared to a crisp, and it had withered to the wrist apparently. To look upon it gave me a chill. It was some little time before I could win the fisherman's confidence so he would talk with me freely, but I usually managed to soothe poor old Sandy down to the beach almost every day, and I would often find him grinding "throw ball" or mending nets, upon which I would stop and chat with him. He was a plodder when turning the crank of the "throw ball" machine as when kneeling in church, and more than once I heard him sternly reprove boys and men who were using profane language.

One day I ventured to ask him about his withered hand. He leathery face twitched strangely, and he finally stopped his work to tell me the story concerning the withered member. "There ain't no long yarn hitched to it," he slowly began. "It wasn't born on me that air way, not by a heap sight. Till I was 24 year old I had two just as good hands as yours be—an' better," he added as he somewhat contemptuously surveyed the state of mine. "I had a fist that could knock over an ox, an' I had a nasty way of usin' it on any body I didn't take no shoo to. An' I carried a knife an' a pistol sometimes. I was marster wicket in them days! Why, sometimes I user even think it'd be fun to kill a man!" "I was just as good fisherman in them days as I be now, an' a letter, for I could handle that air right paw handler. You see I kin't handle no use of that fin. We user go down to Matinees for deep water fish, an' I usually sailed in Cap'n Dow's shop. The cap'n could swear had as much as could, an' with Jim Pitt an' Ben Moore for crew we was knowed as the toughest gang around."

"I had been through a good many blows an' come out all right, an' I didn't cut late I was born to be drowned, when one day as we was making for Matinees for Vine Haven, they came up, the awfullest cyclone or blizzard or something I never saw. It just blowed great guns, the rain came down in buckets, an' the lightning played all over the water. Thunder! I never heard anything like it. "Well, our canvas was all blown out an' our rudder ripped away in less than no time, an' it didn't seem as if I had three minutes longer. Cap'n Dow fell on his knees an' began to pray an' so did I others; but I just swore an' cursed till I was black in the face. "Stop, Sandy!" screamed the cap'n. "Don't swear at God!" "God? I laughed. 'I don't believe that air way. If there is, I hope he'll wither this air right hand!' an' I held it right up over my head. "Then there was the sweetest flash of lightning an' a roar of thunder, and I fell down as if I was dead on the deck. They said that storm passed on in less than a minute, an' the sun came out. Cap'n Dow swore there was a certain streak of fire, the sun right down an' struck my hand. When they picked me up, it was scorched an' withered just as you see it now. I was sick for two weeks, an' from that day to this I've never doubted the existence of an Almighty God."

I did not wonder at his piety. I think the experience would have converted any man.

He Won the Bet.

During the long old winter evenings the favorite resort of the down-east farmer is the village groom, where he can huddle over a warm fire, chew tobacco, smoke and draw the long bow to his heart's delight. Yarns that would put Sindbad and Munchausen to blush are often related at these gatherings, and every town has its champion yarn-spinner, who is generally known as "the biggest gosh darn liar in the state, by gum!" Sometimes his yarns are really artistic, but very often they are as utterly preposterous as to be ridiculous. There were 10 or 12 of us gathered about a roaring wood fire, sitting on mail bags and boxes, away down in Maine one bitter night, and the story telling was under full way when old Smith, the younger son of the party, began to boast about how much he could lift. At this, an old fellow with grizzled beard dyed with tobacco juice straightened up and cleared his throat with a rasping sound that attracted

GEMS IN VERSE.

The Ocean.

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A Costly Gift.

Do you know you have asked for the costliest thing Ever made by the hand above? A woman's heart and a woman's life And woman's wondrous love. Do you know you have asked for this priceless thing As a child might ask for a toy? Demanding that others have died to win With the reckless dash of a boy? You have written my lesson of duty out. Manlike leave you questioned me. Now stand at the bar of my woman's soul Until I have questioned thee.

You require your mittens shall always be hot. I require your heart to be true as God's star. And as pure as his heaven your soul. You require a cook for your mutton and beef. I require a far greater thing. A seamstress you're wanting for socks and fur shirts. I look for a man and a king.

A King for the beautiful world called home. And a man that will make the world. Shall look upon us as he did on the first. And say, "It is very good."

I am fair and young, but the roses will fade From my soft young cheek one day. Will you love them 'mid the falling leaves As you did 'mid the bloom of May?

In your heart an ocean so strong and deep I may launch my all on the tide. A loving woman finds heaven or hell On the day she is made a bride.

I require all things that are grand and true. All this that a man should be. If you give this all, I would stake my life To be all you demand of me.

If you cannot be this, a laundress and cook You can hire, and little to pay. But a woman's heart and a woman's life Are never won in that way.

Concerning Weather.

When the atmospheric forces and all that sort of thing Bring the cold and cutting winter season down. And the irresolute snowflakes of which the poets sing Chase themselves, in chilly frolic, through the air: When the winds are penetrating, and the frost is on the ground, And pedestrian locomotion's rather slow; When the cars are laid on our late whenever homeward bound Because the horses can't get through the snow: Then the voice of man arises, and he tells a funny tale As to how he loves the gentle summer days, When the flowers and and whisper in the leaves by hawthorn dale. And he looks beneath the smiling sun's bright rays. But when the whitening of time brings "gentle summer" on, And he wails and melts beneath the scorching disk. The inclement mortal sings another kind of song. As to how he loves the winter cold and brisk. —Philadelphia Public Ledger.

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All human language feeble is and cold, To paint the fleeting visions that arise, Beguiling me with memories of old. Of other lives passed under other skies. And still the echoes ring; the voices call In wild confusion, like a crowd of dreams. Then twilight shadows, dark and darker, fall. Till not a ray through the dense blackness gleams.

But still again a vague, melodious song, With scattered, broken melodies fills the air. And shadowy forms, in shadowy distance, throng. Wait for the sable mantle of despair.

My soul mounts upward into loftier spheres, Where, beyond boundaries of time and space, I lived and loved before these earthly years Claimed me, in exile, in my present place.

I see, in fleeting rays of heavenly light, The glory of a distant paradise. That all is overhyped by starless night. My anxious questionings meet no replies. Heavy my heart with memories of old. My power to live and strive is overcast By wild desire the mystery to unfold. Which binds my present to that vanished past.

This is my heritage of sorrow now, That veiled and unknown form which once I wore. I cannot fathom when nor where nor how. I only know that I have lived before. —Helen Conant.

Somewhere Between.

Between the daybreak and the sun, Between what's doing and its end, 'Tis what is lost and what is won. The space of life we see. Between the thinking and the deed, Between the asking and the need, 'Tis what we follow and those who lead. I find myself and thee.

Between our hope which shines afar Against life's sky like some bright star, And fate's most stern, relentless bar. All joys and woes are paid. So, if our lives, which seem so bright, Should be obscured by some dark night, Remember there's a brighter light. No darkness can resist.

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We call him strong who stands unmoved— Calm as some temple's beaten rock— When some great trouble lurks its shock: Of him, his strength is proved: Of him, the spent storm folds its wings, How bears he then Life's little things? —Ellen P. Allerton.

Four Things to Learn.

Four things a man must learn to do If he would make his record true: To think without confusion—clearly. To love his fellow men sincerely, To act from honest motives purely, To trust in God and heaven securely. —Henry Van Dyke.

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"Folks don't use us knowledgeable words as they used to, seems if," remarked Uncle Nahum Jenkins pensively. "Now I can't see what sense there is in callin' a man that's kind of different minded 'em a nowadays. A crank goes along well enough if you've got a good purchase on it."

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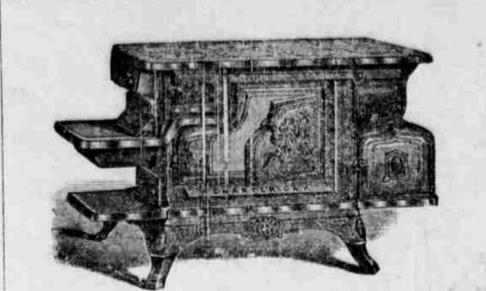
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THE 'BUSY' LITTLE 'BEES. Observe these busy little bees—alaying up their honey and try to be as wise as these by saving of your money. You smoke, say, five cigars a day, and drink, say, six times daily; cards, pool, and billiards, too, you play, and treat the fellows gaily. In twenty years this fun will cost, according to good scholars, with interest, and the time that's lost just \$20,000. But if you count your loss of health and self-inflicted trouble, you will find this foolish waste of wealth will figure more than double. So imitate these busy bees; store up a little treasure, and later you can take your ease, and have a lot of pleasure. The Equitable Hive is where you ought to store your money, and when you're old, you'll have laid by a lot of Tontine money. Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. BRUCE & A. J. CARTWRIGHT, General Managers for the Hawaiian Islands.

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