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COT THE BLESSING.

Last Sunday there was preachin', an' we all
went out to hear;
The little church was crowded, for the rich an'
poor was there;
It was jes' a splendid sermon, an' the singin'
full an' free—
"Amazin' grace, how sweet the sound that saved
a wretch like me."

When I call the sermon splendid, I mean it
was the kind
To take deep root an' bear good fruit in every
sinner's mind;
It was full of consolation for weary hearts that
bleed—
'Twas full of invitation to Christ, and not to
creed.

The text was 'bout the prodigal who spent his
livin' neat,
Until he came at last to want the husks the
swine did eat;
But a sweet thought gave him comfort when he
hardly wished to live:
"I will go unto my father—for my father will
forgive."

"I'm talkin' to you fellers," said the preacher,
"here to-day,
Who spent the Master's livin' in a country far
away;
You've got to go where that feller was—you
can't tell why or how,
But come back to the Father—he's waitin' for
you now!"

From the amen corner to the door the people
gathered near,
An' "Pray for us!" they shouted, an' it seemed
the Lord was there;
An' sich a great handshakin'! well, the precious
time is past,
But the old church in the backwoods got a
blessin' that'll last!

—Atlanta Constitution.

IN BYGONE DAYS.

The day was in July, and the hour mid-afternoon.

The situation is a frontier town in the shadow of grim old mountains—a collection of shanties, tents, and dugouts, and facing the one long and narrow street up and down which the mail-coaches travel as they come and go.

The typical frontier town, as it was, but never will be again. The type of town that has vanished with the herds of buffalo and the countless acres of uncla med land. In the sixties and seventies the town came first—law and order next. In the eighties law and order began to take the place of the gun and the terror. In the sixties men who refused to drink with a stranger were shot dead and the bartender dragged the corpse clear of the door. In those

"TOO CUSSED NICE TO DRINK WITH THIS CROWD."

days each town had its terror, and it was a matter of pride with him to see his victims buried and headboards erected with his tally-mark. In the eighties the terrors disappeared from sight, and the cowboys held up the town at intervals. To day both terror and cowboy are but names, and law and order rules. Law is king, and his heavy hand is respected. Order means progress and civilization, and therefore there is order.

"Whoop! Hurrah! Pop!"

The yells and the pistol shots startle the whole town for an instant, but only for an instant. At night the noise would not have excited remark, but now some one carelessly inquires the cause, and he is as carelessly answered:

"Oh! Big Jack has bored another man. Just got out of bed and is feeling ugly. He'll soon cheer up now. That one makes the seventh, I believe."

The typical town terror is no more nor less than a burly, big ruffian—an ex-miner, ex-prospector—a gambler, adventurer, and outlaw. He has set himself up as "the boss" of the town, of saloons and gambling hells. Some bad men are bluffers and duffers. This one isn't. They "tried him out" several weeks ago and found him game. Two or three men who tried to make him "take water" are buried over there in the gully. He brags and he blusters, but he is no coward. The vigilance committee sent him warning, and he sent back the ears of their messenger. Other terrors resented his taking possession and reaping the honors and he paid a Chinaman a dollar apiece to dig their graves.

Yes, Big Jack was drunk last night and has slept later than usual. He awoke with a headache and a parched throat, and while stumbling across the street to a bar some one ran against him. Draw—level—pull trigger, and Big Jack, swearing like a pirate, doesn't even pause to see who his victim is. It is a stranger to the place—some one on the railroad survey.

"Dig a grave and plant him with the others?" says Big Jack to the smirking Chinaman, and that ends it. The body is dragged away to the gulch and the murderer, feeling more like himself for the drink and the shooting, slouches up the street to the "Happy-Go-Lucky" saloon. This is his head quarters. He has killed two men in here, but has promised the proprietor not to kill any more if he can restrain himself. Not that a murder hurts the proprietor's feelings in the least, but that makes him extra labor and paralyzes business for ten or fifteen minutes. There are a dozen or more men in the saloon waiting to fawn upon "the boss" and bask in the sunlight of his smiles. An emperor has his following; so has the meanest ruffian. When Big Jack laughs, all laugh; when he asserts and declares, all agree. He pulls the string and the puppets dance, and yet all hate and despise him and would like to see him wiped out.

At a rough table in a corner of the room sits an undersized man, about thirty years old. He wears his hair long, his sombrero is one of the largest, and in his belt are his two Colts and a knife. No one knows him. His mustang is at the door, and he is inside to break his fast. It is Charlie White, a Government scout, who has served with Crook and Custer and others on the plains, and who has stood in the shadow of death a hundred times. A good-looking man, with a calm, blue eye, aquiline nose, thin lips and a quiet voice. The crowd had sized him up: "Quiet, but dangerous." The estimate was correct.

Big Jack swaggers into the saloon to receive the salutations and congratulations of the crowd. He is better-natured than he was, but there is a look in his eyes which forebodes danger. Three or four men slip quietly out of the back door, while the others fawn and flatter and press "the boss" to drink with them. He is willing enough; that is a part of the homage he demands. As he stands at the bar, glass in hand, his eye lights on the stranger for the first time. Instinct tells him the man's occupation and warns him not to pick a quarrel. Brute strength and bull-dog courage overpower his instinct. It is a golden opportunity to make a man "crawl" for the amusement of the crowd. It is "all hands take a drink," but the stranger has not left his seat. That is an expression of contempt and defiance.

"Didn't ye hear!" bellows Big Jack as he raps on the bar with his knuckles and eyes the stranger.

The stranger looked up. He knew with whom he had to deal, and he knew what was coming. Those nearest him said that a steely look came into his eyes, and that his lips compressed. Big Jack turned his back to the bar, rested both elbows upon it, and there was a leer on his face as he continued:

"Too cussed nice to drink with this crowd, I expect! Mebbe ye ar' lookin' fur champagne and a white-shirt gang! Mebbe ye want a carpet spread down to walk on as ye move about!"

The stranger looked Big Jack straight in the eyes. The lines on his face hardened and there was a dangerous flash in his eyes. The ruffian noted these signs, and realized that the scout was a bad man to stir up. He had gone too far to retreat, however. The crowd had fallen back to right and left, and the two had a clear field. To turn from the stranger was to lose prestige. Loss of prestige meant death to him. Two kinds of courage were opposed to each other—that coarse-grained fearlessness which is born with brute strength, and which delights in giving and receiving blows, and that quiet but dangerous characteristic which men call "sand," and which is never cruel nor brutal. For a long minute the two faced each other, and Big Jack's adherents saw him change color. He was figuring on his chances. He might bluff the stranger down, but failing in this he hoped to get the drop on him.

"The man who won't drink with me insults me, and the man who insults me has got to crawl outdoors on his hands and knees or git a bullet in his head!"

So growled the ruffian. It was his bluff. He looked his fiercest as he spoke the words but in his own

"HE STOOD FOR FIVE SECONDS SWAYING AND TOTTERING."

heart he knew that they would have no weight with the man whose blue eyes had the gleam of a new bowie knife, but who had not stirred a finger.

"Git down and crawl—git down, will ye, or I'll riddle yer carcass with lead!"

The bluff had failed. Now for the drop. Of a sudden Big Jack dropped his right hand to the butt of a revolver hardly six inches away and pulled the gun and fired. Two or three men started to cheer, but almost as the sound left their lips, and following the other report like the stroke of a bell, came a second discharge. The giant did not fall to the right or to the left. He stood for five seconds, swaying and tottering, eyes wide open and fixed on the stranger, and then without a moan or a sound he sank down in a heap on the floor, shot plumb through the heart. His bullet had passed through the brim of the stranger's sombrero—a poor shot for any sort of marksman only fourteen feet away.

"Is his pardner here?" asked the scout as he looked over the awe-stricken and silent crowd, while from the muzzle of his revolver a thin streak of blue smoke curled lazily upwards.

All looked at him but no one answered.

"Has he any friends who wish to take it up?"

"He had no pardner—no friends!" said one who had cringed and fawned and flattered without stint.

"Then let his Chinaman plant him!" said the scout; and throwing a silver dollar on the table he rose up, returned his gun to its holster and walked out without another look around. Three minutes later he had galloped out of sight on his way to Fort Custer.

SOMEHOW sitting up close to people you don't like very well, never makes you any warmer.

THERE are few ants that can offer of their stores to the butterfly without saying, "I told you so."

SKELETONIZING LEAVES.

A Pleasant Pastime for the Fall and One Prolific of Beautiful Results.

There will be found an interesting pastime during the month of September. The leaves chosen must be quite perfect and not too young, or gathered too late in the season. Rain water is best for the soaking process. Expose the tub to the sun and replenish the water as required. Place the leaves in the water and let them remain until partially decayed, until the skin becomes decomposed; but remove them before the fibrous veins of the leaves are attacked.

The time usually needed to carry the process of decomposition to the right point is about a fortnight, after which they should be examined twice a week, or daily if the weather is warm. When thoroughly soft and pulpy remove them to a basin of clean water. They will be too tender to touch with the hand, and must be lifted gently on cards into the clean water. Have two brushes at hand, an old toothbrush and one of camel's hair, soft, but thick as a pencil.

Having lifted a leaf out of the water on a card, brush tenderly with the soft brush until the whole of the skin is removed, then dip into water, and having reversed the leaf under the water, repeat the process on the other side. If the skeleton is not by this time quite clear of the pulpy matter, use the toothbrush, not with a sweeping motion, but with a few gentle taps. Give the skeleton another washing in clear water the same way as before, then immerse in the bleaching solution, made by pouring water on chloride of lime, and pouring off the clear water when the sediment has quite settled.

Delicate leaves, such as the ivy, will be thoroughly bleached in a couple of hours, but others take longer. They will be spoiled if allowed to remain too long. Then immerse in several clean waters, and leave for half an hour in the last. After this, float the skeleton on a card, in as natural a position as possible, and drain preparatory to the drying, which should follow quickly. An oven not too hot is best.

The skeletons will now be strong enough to bear delicate handling. Leaves like the oak, which contain tannin, resist decomposition and are unmanageable. The best leaves for skeletonizing are those of the ivy, holly, laurel, lime, maple, pear, orange, lemon, walnut, willow, chestnut, white hawthorn and vine. The petals of the hydrangea are excellent for the purpose, the roots of the hemlock, the calyx of Winter cherry, the seed vessels of the thorn apple, henbane, canterbury bell, and columbine.

It will be wise to interest the children in this work, and thus create an interest in the study of botany.

Somebody Else Was Kicked.

A young Poughkeepsian a few days since picked up a friend on Market street and took him home to lunch without notice to the former's wife. she called him one side and explained that there were only a dozen raw oysters, and when their friend had eaten his quota of four he must not be asked to take more. All this the husband promised to remember. When their guest had eaten his four oysters the host asked him to take some more. The wife looked distressed, and the gust declined. The husband insisted that his friend shou d have more. The wife looked as if she were in agony, and the guest firmly refused to allow the rest of the oysters to be brought from the kitchen. Later the wife said to her husband: "How could you urge him to have more oysters when I explained to you that there weren't any more?" "I am very sorry," said the penitent husband, "but I forgot all all about it." "What do you suppose I was kicking you under the table for?" retorted his wife. "But you didn't kick me!" said the husband.—Poughkeepsie News-Press.

THE father who does not put good reading matter in the hands of his children has never done any real praying for their salvation.

RAM'S HORN BLASTS.

Warning Notes Calling the Wicked to Repentance.

CHRIST is God's idea of a man.

IT is better to suffer than to sin.

SINS most fascinating when it hides its face.

OPPOSING God's truth is rebellion against God.

THERE can be no real life where there is no love.

ALE sins are big, no matter how small they look.

IT lightens a duty to resolve to do it cheerfully.

A CIVIL tongue is a better weapon than a bowie knife.

THOSE who would lead others should always look up.

LOVE is the greatest of all things, because it gives all things.

IT takes temptation to show us how much we need Christ.

WHEN you bid your sin good-by don't shake hands with it.

ONE of the devil's hiding places is behind a pile of money.

EVERY dollar in a good man's pocket has the name of God on it.

GOD made the heart of man so big that this world is too small to fill it.

THE man who lives only for himself is engaged in very small business.

TO BE all the time feeling for feeling is a poor way to promote religious life.

NO MAN is pleasing God who does not love his neighbor as he does himself.

KEEP you heart full of sunshine, and God will soon give you a face to match it.

THERE is more help in an ounce of encouragement than there is in a ton of advice.

THE man who would have done so and so if he had been there, never gets there.

SOME people never think it worth while to try to get religion in the hands and feet.

IT is the religion that shines at home against which the devil fights the hardest.

THERE is no such thing as the joy of the Lord in the heart in which there is no faith.

A FOOL will build a house without windows, and then blame God because he has to live in the dark.

PEOPLE who have a good opinion of themselves will tell you that the devil is not such a bad fellow.

"GIVE and it shall be given unto you," is a promise that shows how anxious God is to make us all rich.

THE man who repents on a sick ed from which he recovers, generally backslides before he pays his doctor's bill.

A MAN who unconsciously does much to sour the milk of human kindness, is that fellow who snores in the sleeping car.

THE only people who oppose God's way are those who would have to give up something like an eye or a hand to walk in it.

WHEN a man claims to love God with all his heart, you can generally find out whether he means it by going to him with a collection basket.

A Wonderful Telephone.

The people of the south of France are noted for a slight—a very slight—tendency to exaggerate. A native of that favored clime was present recently when some one was describing a telephone which had been constructed between a town in France and one over the border in Spain.

"Oh! that's nothing," commented the native, not to be overcome by so trifling a circumstance; "you should see the one I've just invented. By using that you talk French in the receiver at Marseilles, and it comes out Spanish at Madrid."

A TERRIBIE COMBAT.

A Magnificent Set-to Between an Indian Bear and Serpent.

The following story, appearing in the Madras Mail, of a great land-serpent would make a good companion story—in his hands—to Rudyard Kipling's sea-serpent tale; but there is this material difference—that this land-serpent story has the advantage of being true. In those great primeval jungles known as the Nullamullais, some Chenchus were engaged in setting their nests for game, when their attention was attracted by the most hideous noises—fierce roars of rage and pain, and a prolonged hissing, like the escape of steam from an engine. They hastened to the spot and beheld the progress of a Homeric conflict.

A huge jungle bear was fighting for its life with a colossal serpent. The serpent wound its enormous folds around the bear; the bear dashed itself from side to side and rolled around the ground in frenzied endeavors to get free, roaring angrily the while and snapping its jaws like castanets at the serpent's folds, which, however, it could not reach, owing to the way in which they were constricted around the bear's quivering body. In this way the belligerents swayed to the summit of a hill, down which the bear cast itself with a velocity that evidently disconcerted the enveloping serpent for it unwound a couple of folds and threw its tail around a tree, evidently with the intention of anchoring the bear to the tree, and preventing the unpleasant concussions that would be engendered by tumbling down hill. This resulted in the serpent's undoing in more ways than one. The rigid line of tail stretched out from the tree to the bear's body gave the bear a chance of seizing hold of its assailant, which up to this time had not been afforded. It was prompt to avail itself of the opportunity, and, turning with a tremendous effort, fastened its powerful jaws into the snake's quivering flesh. The hissing was now appalling, as the writhing serpent rapidly unfolded its huge body and struck savagely at the clinched jaws of the bear to make it release the mangled mass of flesh between. In response, the bear roared furiously, dashing from side to side and worrying the mouthful of serpent in its jaws in paroxysms of anguished rage. Once more the serpent constricted, the bear howled and gasped, and both rolled struggling out of view into the high grass of the forest.

Their track was now marked with pools of blood, and when they were again seen they had parted. The snake evidently badly mangled, was coiled in an attitude of defense, with its head erect, and hissing apprehensively. It had evidently had enough and only wished to be left in peace. Not so the bear. Though nearly crushed to death, with its tongue lolling out from its gasping, foam-flecked and bloody jaws the aroused brute, with innate ferocity, declined to retire from the combat. After a moment's pause it rushed upon the serpent. Evidently the latter was spent from loss of blood, for the bear immediately got it by the head, and dragged it about with roars of triumph. The whole of the undergrowth around was beaten down flat by the convulsive strokes of the great serpent's tail as the bear crushed its head to pieces, and it ultimately lay an inert and lifeless mass beneath the ferocious assaults of its vindictive enemy. The Chenchus believe the encounter was accidental. It occurred on a game track in the forest, and they are of opinion that the serpent was sunning itself on the path when the bear came along, and, as neither would yield the path to the other, the fight resulted.

Knew What Would Be Acceptable.

Pacer—So you write your wifey faithfully every day?

Binks—Yes.

Pacer—What's the first thing you say?

Binks—Pay to bearer, etc.—Town Topics.

WE often wonder if Solomon won all his wives with true love.