That Night at Pukkapore.

When Gwenny Travers's photographs came out to the station every one was in love with them at once, and when, a year afterward, it was announced that Miss Gwenny was really expected, and the colonel went down to Bombay to meet her, there was great rejoicing at Pukkapore.

Every male thing, from the brigadier to young Dubbs, rejoiced, on his own account, partly, and also on that of Mrs. Travers, the colonel's wife, whose eldest daughter Gwenny was.

Mrs. Travers was the mother and confidante of everybody; a year before she had been home on sick leave, and it was on her return that the photographs made their appearance, and began to be one of the recognized interests of the station. "Have you seen the colonel's girl's photos?" "Which do you like the best, the one in the riding-habit or the one with her hair down?" "Isn't that sailor hat vignette awfully fetching?" People had hardly got over these comments and criticisms before it was announced that Gwenny was really on her way out; and then, of course, out came the photographs again with renewed importance that one might decide, now that she was so near, what Miss Gwenny was actually like.

When the date for her sailing was fixed, Mrs. Travers began to fuss about fixing up her room. "She must have the pink room, Charles; it will want a lot of doing up, but I shall begin at once, and"—

"Not the pink room, my dear," said the colonel, from behind his paper, "the little one beyond ours is more suitable."

"Indeed, no; that's much too small for any young lady, and I should like the dear child to have a pretty, nice, cool room that she can walk about in. Why, at school she had a tiny little cubicle like a cabin, and a girl thinks so much of her own room. I can't think why you have a prejudice against the pink room—it will want an entire turnout, for the servants have crammed it with things like a go-down, but you wait till Rosina and I have got it in order, and you'll be quite astonished how pretty it will be."

"I'd rather she had the smaller one," persisted the colonel, and, though he did not give any reason, his face wore a perturbed look, which was out of keeping with the trifling occasion of difference, but his wife had rustled away to take counsel of Rosina, the little Portuguese lady's maid, and the pink room might be looked upon as a settled question.

By the time the colonel started for Bombay the room was ready, and very pretty it was; the rather faded pink of the walls had been renewed, there was a brass bedstead and white aspinalled furniture, white curtains and pink sash ribbons to tie them up; new matting and a bookcase, and a shelf for photographs running around like a dado. Mrs. Travers and Rosina even aspinalled the huge wooden cupboard built into the wall, and made a smart pattern of Christmas cards to outline the panels; then all the ladies came to look at their handiwork and admire it and talk about Gwenny's coming.

"Wasn't this where"—Mrs Trent said, and then stopped; Mrs. Bogle, the doctor's wife, had trodden on her gown.

"Yes," Mrs. Travers hastened to explain, full of her own prowess, "this was where we used to keep all sorts of stores and boxes and things; the room was much too good for that; only the colonel filled it up with things the year I was at home. I had such work to clear it, but Rosina and I have worked wonders, don't you think?"

Mrs. Bogle assured her that the effect was enchanting; Mrs. Trent held her tongue and examined the curtains, and then they all went to tea.

Two days after Gwenny arrived, and a week later every one was agreed that neither the riding-habit nor the sailor hat portrait was "in it" with the Miss Gwenny who sat smiling in her mother's drawing room, making that always pleasant place a perfect paradise to the brigadier, who was a disconsolate widower of eight months' standing, and to young Dubbs, and to all the various grades, ranks and variety, civil and military, who filled the wide interval between that zenith and the nadir of Pukkapore male society.

The beauty of Gwenny Travers was that she smiled on all alike, and that is a very great and uncommon point of beauty, especially in an Indian military station; the brigadier was a pompous old bore, Dubbs was a timid young ass, Mrs. Bogle was a good-natured gossip, and Mrs. Trent a mal a propos tattler; but one and all received the same pleasant treatment—friendly, modest, sincere—from the colonel's daughter, and the first week of her arrival spread merrily along with a continuous round of merrymaking, to welcome the young lady who had galvanized the dull little place into life. Then, as a natural consequence, came a whole crop of proposals from everybody, all directed at the self-same lady. The brigadier took to wearing primrose gloves without graduating toward Hope Reborn by any of the legitimate stages of half-mourning, and then as suddenly left for Cashmir; little Dubbs, after galloping his red pony, Ructions, over from cantonments five days a week, on some excuse or other to the colonel's house, turned his steed's head about, and was met gloomily cantering in the opposite direction when everybody else was going to the tennis ground. It was the same with nearly everybody, and everybody felt a little low and reactionary in consequence, and applied for leave almost in a body. After that there was a general settling down, and Gwenny Travers and her mother began to taste the sweets of home life and companionship; the elder woman grew young again in her daughter's society, and both the colonel and she felt that the years that were past, the struggles and anxieties of their earlier married life, were as nothing now that "the girl" had come home.

It was Major Danvers, the colonel's right hand man, who first discovered that Gwenny was not looking herself at all; in fact, had altered very considerably in the couple months she had been in India, a fact which her father and mother, in their increased happiness, had never observed. At first he kept the matter to himself, and watched the girl closely, wondering if any love affairs, which had been common property on the station, had really affected her, and sighed to think of certain long-deferred expectations at home, which kept him a poor man and a bachelor. Presently he made so bold as to ask Mrs. Travers if the heat were not very trying to Miss Gwenny; she had grown so pale and so quiet now that the first excitement of her arrival was over, and, though she was as sweet and pleasant to every one, there seemed something lacking in the spontaneity of her enjoyment, and Gwenny, coming into the room at the moment, the suddenly awakened mother flew at her with a hundred questions of eager anxiety. Gwenny put them all aside, and Major Danvers got up to go, feeling horribly guilty at the storm he had raised; there was a look in the girl's eyes, too, as she bade him good-bye, which haunted him. Was she appealing to him? Had anything frightened her? He strode off to his quarters feeling puzzled and vexed with himself—what a fool he had been to put his finger into a ladies' pie, and what a goose the colonel's wife was not to take things more sensibly. He had only meant to give her a little hint, and she had flown into a fever and made him look like a fool before Gwenny; yet—yet—what on earth was wrong with Gwenny?

"That's where I find fault with Roger Danvers," grumbled Mrs. Travers to her husband. "He is a capital soldier and a good man, I know, but he's dreadfully gauche. Now, poor, dear Charley Kettering would never have said such a thing—as if a mother hadn't the sharpest eyes of anybody in the world for her own daughter. Did you ever think, colonel, what a couple Gweeny and poor Charley would have made if he had lievd? He used to call her his little wife years ago, before she went home to school. Ah, dear, dear, India takes the best of us."

The colonel's wife was a very charming woman, but she was not keenly observant, and it had never struck her that allusions to poor Charlie Kettering, who had died during the year she was at home, and whom the colonel had nursed in his last illness, was specially distasteful to her husband.

The next time Gwenny met Roger Danvers at the tennis ground, and could speak to him for a moment unobserved, she said: "Don't put ideas into mamma's head, Major Danvers. Indeed, I'm all right, only a little tired sometimes."

"I was so sorry, Miss Gwenny, for the commotion I had raised. I could have shot myself afterward, when I saw that I had frightened your mother and annoyed you; but, forgive me for repeating it, you are looking very different, and—are you sure there is nothing the matter?"

"No-o, nothing; that is—oh, if you've noticed, it must be noticeable"—and Gwenny's face grew suddenly pink and her eyes filled with tears. "It's the nights here, Major Danvers. I don't know what it is, but they are terrible—always the same kind of terror, and the same figure"—

She stopped in confusion.

They had walked to the end of the tennis ground, and were practically alone; even Mrs. Trent would not have been so tactless as to disturb them, and as they leaned against the railing Danvers could feel the shudder that shook the girl's slight frame.

"Do you mean that you dream, and dream always of the same figure?" he asked, in a low voice.

"I don't know if it is a dream, or if I am awake when the thought comes to me, but it is something horrible—in my room," Gwenny said in shaken, jerky tones. "I think I go to sleep all right, and it is later that it comes on. Oh, I can't tell anybody; let us go back to the others," and she turned to walk back, but Danvers saw that her face was ashy white now, and her eyes distended with real fear.

"One moment," he said, detaining her. "Can't you tell your mother?"

"I want to, but she took such pleasure in making that pretty room for me, and now I can never enter it without the dreadful feeling coming over me, and it seems—oh, it seems as if I were going mad."

"Nonsense, Miss Gwenny; you musn't say such things, even in jest. You must tell your father, then."

The girl looked full at him as the tone of command struck her. She was a soldier's daughter, and answered to it at once.

"Papa? Do you think I could? He is always so busy, and I never thought of daring to trouble him; but I could more easily explain it to him than to mamma, I think."

"Then do it at once; promise me, Gwenny, to-night without fail," the young man said, almost fiercely, for they were nearing the others now, and Mrs. Bogle's pince-nez was fixed like a burning glass upon them. "Promise"—and Gwenny promised in a quick whisper, for there is one thing a girl cannot resist in a man, and that is a sudden exhibition of masterfulness.

Like other powerful animals, it is perhaps a good thing they do not know wherein their strength lies.

About 10 o'clock that night, as Danvers was smoking and fancying he was reading in his quarters, Colonel Travers came in; the younger man guessed in a moment something of what had brought him, and jumped up nervously with the expectancy of an explanation in his face.

"I want you to come up to the bungalow with me, Danvers; I can tell you what about as we go, only look sharp," and a moment later the two men were striding quickly over the white moonlit road.

"My girl spoke to you this afternoon about something — something that troubled and disturbed her, and you told her to come to me. No, you did quite rightly," as the major would have explained his seeming interference—"quite rightly; it is myself I blame for my blindness till now. She came and told me this evening all about it, and now I want your help to see me through something that requires more than one man's nerve and evidence. The poor child tells me that every night since she has been here—since she has slept in the pink room, she has dreamt—she supposes it to be a dream—of a figure which stands beside her bed and urges her to come away, to follow it; in short"—

"A ghost?" Danvers asked; he was sorry for poor little Gwenny in this, to him, self-inflicted torture; but he did not believe in ghosts.

"As the figure turns away from her bedside she invariably sees its face—and it is the face of a hanged man, Danvers."

"Whew! Some one has told her the story."

"I think not; even her mother doesn't know it. It happened, as you know, when my wife was in England, and I've taken the utmost care that the particulars of poor Kettering's death should never come to her ears—Rosina, the maid, is new; the old story of Kettering being seen has quite died away. I was averse, it is true, to Gwenny having that room, but my wife had set her heart on it, and I thought it would make more stir to explain than to let it pass. And all these weeks the child has been suffering in silence. She says that after it has shown her its face it melts away, as it were, into the big corner cupboard. What do you say to that?"

"The cupboard where he hanged himself, sir?"

"The same."

"What do you mean to do, colonel?"

"My wife has gone to bed with a headache. I told them to make me up the dressing-room bed, and I would sleep there, as I had some accounts to go through and might be very late. I have just sent Gwenny to bed with a dose of bromide that will keep her fast and sound for the next nine hours. She was very brave and good about sleeping alone in the room that she so fears and dislikes, but I promised her that this should be the last night of it, and that I would watch her and keep her safe. Here we are"—softly tiptoeing across the veranda, and letting himself in at one of the drawing room windows—"I am going to open Gwenny's door there across the passage, and shall sit and watch—and you can remain here, just within call; smoke if you like, but don't drop off to sleep if you can help it; and if I see anything I will call, and you must come and bear witness."

Danvers hardly knew whether to laugh or not at the colonel's simple, ghost-trapping preparations; but, after all, they were sensible, matter-of-fact measures, which would reassure Gwenny tomorrow morning when she awoke after a long, refreshing sleep, and learnt that the spell was broken and nothing supernatural had been seen.

About two hours later: "Danvers, come!" sounded a hoarse whisper across the passage. Roger was at the colonel's side in a second.

What was it? In the faint light of the bedroom, where a night-lamp burned, aided by the rays from the passage-lamp outside, the two watchers in the doorway could see a slight, shadowy figure on the farther side of Gwenny's bed—a figure that was strangely familiar to them both, for, though but its side and shoulder were to them, they recognized the bearing and shape of Charlie Kettering, the smartest young fellow the regiment had ever known. The thing stooped over Gwenny's pillow and held out its arms, but the girl lay perfectly still, her face hidden from them, and after what seemed an hour of horror it lifted itself up erect and turned away. Then at the bottom of the bed it halted for a moment and slowly cast a lingering glance around the room, moving its head deliberately till it looked full in the faces of the two men not twenty feet away—it was the face of Charlie Kettering as the colonel and the major had last seen it eighteen months before, livid and terrible from its own suicidal act.

"Hold back—hold back! Don't wake Gwenny; it might kill her," the colonel entreated, as Roger struggled hard to dash into the room; the figure was gone—gone even as they looked, melting away in the direction of the great corner cupboard which Mrs. Travers had decorated for her daughter. "Here, help me with this," and stepping across to Gwenny's bed he lifted one end of the little mattress on which the girl lay, and signed to Danvers to take the other.

"We'll have her out of this." And without another word they carried her across the passage to the colonel's dressing room, and laid her, just as she was, on the colonel's bed. Her father looked at her anxiously. "No, I believe it's all right; the bromide hasn't failed me; whatever that devilish thing was, tonight she has not seen it. And to think that we have let her suffer this without finding out. Gad, man, why don't you speak? What do you think it was?"

"I don't think, colonel—I know it was Charlie Kettering."

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Next morning Gwenny woke up very late for breakfast and told her father that she had a splendid night—not a dream nor a sound had disturbed her, as he might see for himself, if it was he who had carried her bodily into the dressing room. How in the world did he manage to lift her and her mattress like that all alone? But the colonel kept his own counsel, and sent Rosina to bring her her own toilet necessaries, for he could not even bear that she should enter the pink room again. And in the course of the day, such was the colonel's talent for organization, Mrs. and Miss Travers found themselves packed on a visit which had long been impending, but which was now decided on all in a hurry, as the drains of the bungalow were found to require immediate attention. And when, some weeks later, they returned to Pukkapore it was to find the colonel established in brand new quarters, for the engineer had given his verdict that the old bungalow was quite too hopeless a job to spend money over. The two ladies are immensely pleased with the change—Mrs. Travers because she likes her drawing room, Gwenny because she likes her bedroom better; the girl has recovered her roses and her spirits, and has forgotten, or pretends she had forgotten, that afternoon's confidence to Roger Danvers on the tennis ground—perhaps this is only because the major is "Sir Roger" now—the old uncle in England having considerately died "by last mail"—and seems a little strange at first. But Danvers is biding his time—the colonel knows his secret—and the colonel's lady looks more favorably on the baronet than she did on the major, and has not been heard to compare him unfavorably with poor Charlie Kettering for a long time. Whether Charlie Kettering lies quietly in his grave, or still haunts the dismantled bungalow, neither Danvers nor the colonel cares to inquire. Luckily Pukkapore is a stirring little station, where the recollection of poor Charlie's sad end during the fever which suddenly rendered him temporarily irresponsible has been wiped out by many happier events.—G. B. Stuart, in the Argosy.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The weight of evidence goes to show that the vulture obtains knowledge of the presence of food by sight alone.

The British Parliament imposed a tax on bachelors in 1695, and again in 1795. The impost was repealed early in this century.

The great wall of China is 1,200 miles in length. It is 20 feet in hight and in thickness 25 feet at the base and 15 at the top.

Cats and several other animals have a false eyelid, which can be drawn over the eyeball, either to cleanse it or to protect it from too strong a light.

Cotton manufactories are found in nearly every State except the extreme Northwest, though the principal seat of this manufacture has always been in New England.

A railway bridge, the largest cantilever bridge in the world, spans the river Forth with two spans, each of 1,700 feet. It was erected at a cost of nearly $20,000,000.

In Mexico and Siam as well, judge, jury and lawyers all smoke in court, if they wish to, while a case is being heard. Even the prisoner is not deprived of his cigar or cigarette.

C. E. Bradford, a banker of Augusta, Wis., has contracted blood poisoning from the habit of wetting his fingers on his lips when counting bills. He has been obliged to go to the hospital for treatment.

There is an example of the conservatism of European railways in the ado that is being made over the adoption of a French road, the Chemin de fer de l'Ouest, of the American system of checking baggage.

Of the total American population born of native parents, 32 per cent. were earning wages when the tenth census was taken. The proportion of bread winners among our immigrants is larger than among the native population.

The Egyptians believed that the soul lived only as long as the body endured, hence their reason for embalming the body to make it last as long as possible. It is estimated that altogether there are 400,000,000 mummies in Egypt.

Caged lions and tigers, pumas and jaguars take no notice of the men and women passing in front of them, but let a dog be brought anywhere near the cage, and they show their savage nature at once and spring up, glaring out savagely.

The most numerous of the professional classes in our country when the tenth census was taken was that engaged in education. There were 227,710 pedagogues, who taught the young American idea how to shoot in the most approved fashion.

London's fire brigade is largely recruited from the navy. The wages vary from £1 4s for the fourth class to £1 15s for the first class men, while the officers in charge of stations receive from £2 2s to £2 10s per week, with rooms, lighting and firing.

What was regarded as a very fair estimate placed the loss to Arostook, Me., farmers in consequence of the great slump in prices of potatoes this spring at $275,000. These are the figures sent out from the Agricultural Department at Augusta.

The true origin and meaning of the expression O. K. is said to be as follows: More than a century ago the best tobacco and the best rum came from Aux Cayes (pronounced O. K.), and the best of anything was designated Aux Cayes, or O. K.

According to the last census there were 50,000 Germans, 26,000 Americans, 24,000 Russians, 21,000 Poles, 21,000 French, 14,000 Scandinavians, 10,000 Italians, 10,000 Dutch and Belgians, 7,000 Swiss and a considerable number of other nationalities in England.

Coffee planting promises to be the great industry of British Central Africa. The export of coffee in 1893, about 95,000 pounds, was nearly double that of 1892, that of 1894 was nearly double that of 1893 and 1895 "can now be definitely expected to double that of 1894."

In sawing through a white oak log three feet in diameter a few days ago, a sawyer at Blanchester, O., came across the date 1780 carved in the wood near the middle of the log. The figures were very distinct. The carving was doubtless done when the tree was young.

It is said that in Virginia there are 1,000,000 acres of waste land, or land that is not under cultivation, more than there is under cultivation, while in North Carolina there is double the land not cultivated that is cultivated. Illinois has 4,000,000 of its 30,000,000 that are idle.

The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America has a membership of 788,224. This denomination claims 6,717 organizations, and worships in 6,663 churches, seating 2,225,044 people. It also utilizes 556 halls, seating 57,805 people. The value of the church property is $74,455,200.

The Germans have a beautiful word instead of keeper or housewife; they say "housemother." The youngest maid or matron who takes care of the home has earned the title of housemother, as if she were the owner of everything, and everything looked up to her in return.

The following works were by the ancients esteemed the seven wonders of the world: The Pyramids, the tomb of Mausoleus, the Temple of Diana, the hanging gardens of Babylon, the Colossus of Rhodes, the ivory and gold statue of Jupiter Olympus, and the Pharos, or watch tower, of Egypt.

According to the trials of carrier pigeons recently made in the American navy, these birds are likely to prove very useful at sea in carrying dispatches. Only 10 per cent. of the pigeons sent off failed to return "home," and some of the "homers" covered 200 miles of ocean at a speed of 30 miles an hour.

Wedding comes from an old word "wad," or "wed," a pledge or token still used in Scotland to denote a bail or surety. Anglo-Saxon custom ordained that, when the betrothal of young people took place, the youth gave the maiden certain "weds," one of which was a ring. It was put on the right hand then, and subsequently removed to the left on marriage.

Bret Harte Told This, but Never Wrote It.

F. H. B., in Chicago Tribune.

I think I met Bret Harte once. I am not positive about it. In the days when Bret Harte was making a name for himself in the West I was a passenger in the stage coach between Denver and several towns in the contiguous section. On that trip I fell in with a man who said he was Bret Harte. He came into the stage after nightfall and somewhere on the road between that hour and the break of day he got out. Some time in the night, in spite of the fact that the man was unusually interesting, I went to sleep. Several consecutive days of travel had worn me to exhaustion and my condition yielded to the demand of nature.

I have always regretted that it was so. Since the name of Bret Harte has been familiarized in two continents and since he belongs to my own country, and having read everything he has written, so far as I now know, it is most annoying for me to be in the doubt I am. His photographs that I have seen do not solve the mystery. for as I have already said we—that is, the man who said he was Bret Harte and myself—were vis-a-vis in a ramshackle conveyance on a rocky road in the depths of a starless night, I could not see his face with any distinctness.

He broke the ice by asking me if I had been in the country very long. It was my first trip and I told him so. I soon learned from him that he was familiar with it and its strange people. But no man was ever more loyal to his own than was this man to those whom he afterwards immortalized.

For some time he interested me. To be more accurate, he interested me all the time I listened. It was not his fault or his lack of being entertaining that caused me to drop into a state of forgetfulness. Before I was overcome I had asked him several questions, to all of which he replied satisfactorily. One of these questions I shall never forget, not because there was any originality in it, but because it drew from him a story which I have often looked for in his writings, but have never found. And that is one reason and the only one I have, for thinking that the man may not have been Bret Harte, for if it were otherwise I think he would certainly have woven it into one of his characteristic sketches. I have one excuse now to offer for attempting to give it. He—Bret Harte, or whoever the man was—has neglected to write it. The question I asked was this: Are these people as sincere in their assertions for justice as they appear to be?

He answered without hesitation. He said that no man had written or spoken of them as they deserved. He assured me that there had been no exaggeration of their character. I shall not attempt at this late day to give the story as he told it. I could not and do him the credit he deserves—whoever he was. As I recall it it was something like this:

In one of the mining camps—he named it in telling the story, but I have long since forgotten that—was a man who had come to the place unknown. That was nothing in that country. It did not matter what a man had been previous to settling, or where he hailed from. His record, his pedigree, dated from the hour he hit the gravel in the camp or began to live on the ranch. There was an exception to this, too, as I recall the story. If it came to light that the man had been a hypocrite and was continuing along that line retribution began from the time of his first offense. But if he had gone wrong somewhere else and had come into the gulch to reform and was "square" in his conduct from that time till he had "passed in his checks" his past "didn't count."

This man was predisposed to a certain sort of exclusiveness which was in his favor. The noisy man "who talked with his mouth" in that country was generally spotted. At times this man would be missed from the camp. He would be away three days, a week, or occasionally three weeks. He never made known the day of his departure and he always came back in the night, and no one knew he was back until he walked out to his breakfast. It soon came to be known that he did not want to be questioned about his trips. When a man in that country let an intimation of that kind drop it was respected.

He never received a letter while he was in the camp and no one ever saw him write one. He never read a newspaper or a book, and occasionally, when the news of some event of national import was heard of and discussed in the evening, he was as indifferent as an Indian when he is posing. He asked no questions. He had a name, of course, but that has escaped me. But I remember that he had been tagged with some nickname or title, I have forgotten which, and by that he was known in all that section.

One morning, after he had been off on a characteristic trip, he was found dead. There were no doctors in the camp, and such an official as a coroner was not necessary in those days. The boys removed his clothes and turned over the body several times to satisfy themselves that he had not ended his own existence. They looked in all of his pockets, but there was not a scratch of a pen or a pencil mark, and no letters or memoranda. There was in a piece of tightly-twisted paper a little bunch of hair. It was not braided, nor plaited, nor tied with a ribbon nor a string. But the boys allowed that it was "some woman's," and they put it back in the greasy bit of paper and into the pocket from which it had been taken.

A committee took the body up on the side of a mountain, dug a hole in the ground, and "made the buryin'." Somebody stuck a bit of a branch at the head of the grave. The committee returned and reported to the man who was a sort of ruler in the camp, and he gave it out that a little game that had been arranged for was not to be played that night, and the postmaster was told not to open the mail that day when it should arrive. The usual season of mourning could not be carried out in this case, but there was no business in the camp for twenty-four hours.

That night the man who was in authority called for volunteers to write, and one young man who had a face like a girl stepped out. The others excused themselves on the ground that they could write, but their "spellin'" was poor. The young volunteer said he could spell names of people and of towns if they were not too long, but that his "writin' was bad." He was instructed by the man in authority to "write a piece for the paper about the dead man, tellin' where he is buried, and that he didn't say nothin' about his intentions to pass in his checks, and that he didn't have nothin' comin' to him except a check at the Golden Nugget for one drink, which the friends of diseased ha. and would keep till called for by his friends or his kin."

The young man who drew the ticket for writing the piece was excused from other duty that day so as to give him a chance to "do it clean and decent." And then the "piece" was sent by courier to a town fifty miles away, to a preacher, who was asked to look it over and fix it so as it would read all right in the paper.

It was printed and that was the occasion of the editor of the paper getting one new subscriber at the camp.

Several weeks after that a woman got out of the stage coach at the tavern where the postoffice was a part of the business. After she had talked with the man in authority a while he called together the committee which had buried the dead, and said that the "lady had read the piece in the paper as to the diseased and she would like to see him." The committee took her up to the grave on the side of the mountain and dug up the corpse. One of them said to her: "You mayn't know him when you see him, 'cause we didn't have no store clothes to put on him." Whereupon the "lady" replied that she reckoned she wouldn't know him in a new suit, as "her man" never had but the one suit to his back. When the body was exhumed the committee withdrew a respectful distance while the "lady" satisfied herself. She called them and informed them that "it was the same," and spoke of certain "identification marks," which the committee verified. She returned to the camp and had another conference with the man in authority. That night a mass-meeting was held, at which the man in authority told the people that the "widow of the diseased was present in the flesh," and that she had news. He introduced her and she told how the man had wronged her after she had been sick so long, and that he had been in the habit when he would leave camp of taking quartz to the big town, where he sold it. The quartz was the property of the camp. She declared she had no intention of speaking ill of the dead, but she had understood that he had died a natural death "while playin' false," and that the camp had actually buried him, which was contrary to the custom in such cases.

After she had quit talking the man in authority stood up and asked: "What is the pleasure of the widder of the diseased?"

She said she wasn't there to say anything "evil" of the dead. She protested she did not come to create any disturbance, but she said in just so many words that the "diseased had fooled the community in which he lived."

The man in authority stood up on a cracker box in one corner of the room, and the committee and the widow listened most respectfully. The speaker was just as they saw him every day in the camp.

"You heard what the lady said about him. He played it low down on her, and he fooled us by his bein' so quiet. We give him the best buryin' we could, and more, fer a head piece was stuck in the ground showin' which way he was layin'. It ain't every man that gits that."

There was an intimation of a demonstration of approval of the speaker's remarks, but he checked it. "This ain't no 4th of July business," he said, "and it tain't no meetin' to open up a new mine. We are here for solemner things than that. I will ask the lady to step out for a few minutes."

The "lady" was accompanied without by one of the committee, who was instructed to remain with her, "to keep her company." Then the speaker resumed:

"It's a sign when a man is buried here the same as if he was in the States, that he were squar, and it's notice to the Recordin' Angel that he's fiten to pass in. But when he is buried on a lamb, or left in the gulch with shot in him, it's a sign that he warn't in good standin' in the community whar he lived, and, likewise, is a warnin' to them that's like him to number thar days. It's the 'pinion of this court that the committee that buried him take him up and do to him what they orter to have done to him in the first place. Is the court backed?"

There was a low murmur of consent. The speaker continued: "You've still got sand. But the widder of the diseased ain't to know nothin' about it, fer wimmen allus fergives a man at the last minit, and we don't want this resereckshun to get spiled. Now bring her in, and when the meetin' is over and the widder of the diseased is on her way outen the camp, the committee will do thar duty."

When the "widder of the diseased" was brought back the speaker, who had some of the elements of a diplomat in his rough makeup, said to her: "Mum, the citizens of this here camp has told me to tell you that you have thar sympathy. But sympathy wat ain't got any linin' to it, nor no buttons, nor nothin', won't tote you very fur, so the citizens have told me to give you the followin', with thar specially regards. Don't say nothin'. Just take it and go."

The speaker's "followin'" was a belt full of gold. It was his own, but Bret Harte, or whoever he was, told me that the speaker lost nothing by it.

That night the committee waited on the speaker and informed him that they had "complied." They had "dug up the diseased," put a rope around his neck and swung the body off a limb. And when it had "danced around so many times" they cut it down and put it back into the hole and "kivered it up knee deep."

The speaker grunted a disapproval. He said nobody would know but what the "diseased had died decent." "What's the use of puttin' a mark on a man if you're goin' to rub it out. That ain't the way they done with Cain. You ain't got no right to change the law, as it was made by him." And the speaker turned his face upward and pointed in the direction of his gaze.

The head man of the committee apologized by saying that this was the first case of the kind that they had handled, and that they would do better next time. They were excused and returned to camp.

In the course of a few weeks another woman came into camp and made inquiries of a man about whose death she had read in the papers.

"What was he to you, mum?" asked the speaker—the man in authority—the court.

"Nothin'," she said in a girlish voice, "now, but he was once my husband."

"Who broke the splice?" The speaker saw she did not quite understand. "Who done the separatin', him or you, and was thar any legal proceedin's in the case?"

"Do you mean if we were divorced?"

"I reckon, mum, you've got onto my meanin'. Yes."

"There was never any divorce. He went away from me when I was helpless and when my baby was four days old, and I never saw him again, but I heard he was here, and then they told me about his dying here, and I have come, as you see, in the hope that he may have left something for his child. God knows I want nothing of his."

"If you will excuse me, mum, the court would like to ax you one question, hopin' it won't hurt your feelin's, what's already bruised too bad. Do you ever have the hystericks, or do any faintin'?"

She divined his meaning. "I have stood a great deal," she said. "Go on. I am not afraid to hear anything."

"Said like a real lady. You've got sand, and it's all gold," replied the speaker, touched by the woman's heroism. "What I wanted to ax you is: Are you number one or number two—which comes first?"

For a moment there was no sound save that of the leaves as they were fanned by the winds of the mountains and of a musical gurgle of a crystal stream that broke into pearls against the rocks in a canyon. The woman's thin, white hands, as transparent as the petals of a rose, clasped her forehead. Her eyes, blue like the cloudless sky, closed, and a low sigh, like that which one hears sometimes in the evening wind, escaped her thin lips. She was carried out of the room, but the speaker never knew whether she was number one or number two.

"I reckon," he said, as he piled up the flowers of that strangely beautiful land on her grave, "I reckon it tain't none of my business. That's for him to know." And he turned his face upward and his hand pointed in the direction of his gaze.

When that duty was over the committee met again, and again they went up on the side of the mountain and had another "resurrection." It was in the daytime. The speaker went with them. When the body was taken out it was stood up, or fastened, to a tree, and six quick reports of as many rifles made the valley below echo. One of the rifle balls had cut the cord which bound the body to a tree and it fell forward, pierced by the other five.

The committe stood like regulars awaiting orders. The speaker went forward and felt of the wrist of the dead body. Then he put one ear to the chest. Then he put his hand over the heart. Then he walked back to the line where the committee was standing like sentinels. "Fill up the hole," he said. It was not very deep and it did not take long. They returned to the camp, and late that night, after a long stillness, one of the committee said to the speaker: "Beggin' your parding, I think we forgot somethin' this mornin'."

"It's purty late in the day to do any thinkin', but you kin say it, and be quick about it," said the speaker, whose face looked like a thunder cloud.

"We forgot to put the diseased in the hole before we filled it in," was the "think" of the committeeman.

The speaker stood up and the light of the campfire flashed over his face, and a smile was there which was complete satisfaction. "It was not the intention," he said, and he walked away to his hut and left the committee alone by the flickering fagots.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Value of French.

Life.

"French enables one to express such shades of meaning, you know."

"Yes, I know. And such indelicate ones, too."

As the Coming Woman Will Do.

Harlem Life.

Ethel—I—er—I wish—er—that is, I came to ask if I might marry your son?

His Papa—Dear me! What have you to support a husband on?

An Indorsement.

Washington Star.

"Is Bunkins as good as his word?" asked one business man.

"I guess he is," replied the other. "His word isn't good for anything."

On His Return.

Detroit Free Press.

Mother—If you wanted to go fishing why didn't you ask me instead of running off and going?

Johnnie (from experience)—Because I wanted to go fishin'.

Vindictive.

Puck.

Jess—Here comes that disagreeable Miss Jones.

Jack—Don't you like her?

Jess—I hate her. Sometimes when we meet I don't even kiss her.

Modern.

Puck.

Employer—I don't see why you should ask me to pay you more money; you do no more work than formerly.

Typewritist—No, sir, but, you see, I have a husband to support now.

Not Fully Ordained.

Judge.

Clerk—I hear you've got a trolley line up to your town now.

Uncle Silas (modestly)—Wa-al, yes; we've got what they call a trolley line, although we hain't had nobody killed yet.

No Drugs Needed.

New York Weekly.

Mrs. Ebony—Little Caesar's jaws are locked fast.

Dr. Darktown—Am dey locked shet or locked open?

"Dey is locked open, doctah."

"Dat's easy cured. Put er piece er broiled chicken between 'em, an' ef dat don't work, try watermillion."

Time's Changes.

Harper's Bazar.

"I thought you said, about a year ago, that you would not ride a bicycle, as your husband did not like to have you make yourself conspicuous?"

"So I did."

"Well, why do you ride now?"

"For the same reason. My husband does not like to have me make myself conspicuous."

No Longer a Crime.

Puck.

Tourist (in Oklahoma)—Horses are pretty cheap here nowadays, aren't they?

Alkali Ike—Cheap? They are so blamed cheap that when we [...]ure a horse thief we send him to the [...] asylum instead of lynchin' him.

A Victim of Circumstances.

Puck.

Mrs. Jones—It is strange that a strong man like you cannot get work.

The Tramp—Well, yer see, Mum, people wants reference from me last employer, an' he's been dead twenty years.

A Fair Question.

Roxbury Gazette.

Bill Bulizer—What d'yer get for seats in this theater?

Ticket Agent—We charge popular prices.

Bill Bulizer—Say, don't yer think if yer wuz ter drop them a little lower they'd be just as popular?

Important Information.

Tammany Times.

A professor in the medical department of Columbia College asked one of the more advanced students:

"What is the name of the teeth that a human being gets last?"

"False teeth, of course."

Her Answer.

Harper's Bazar.

Mrs. McBride (entering the kitchen)—Bridget, didn't I see that policeman kiss you?

Bridget—Well, mum, sure an' yez wouldn't hev me lay mesilf opin to arrest for resistin' an officer, mum.

The Invisible Supply.

New York Weekly.

Mr. Astorbilt—I wish a genuine imported cigar.

Boy—Very sorry, sir, but the boss is out.

"I don't want the boss; I want an imported cigar. Haven't you any?"

"Yes, sir, we've got two, but they're in the safe."

AMATEUR GARDENING.

One of Its Unsolved Problems Is How to Keep Pepper Out of Radishes.

Boston Transcript.

The experiences of the amateur gardener in his first year in the garden after so long an intermission that he may be said to have forgotten all he ever knew about gardening are full of thrilling interest. In the first place he finds interest in the fact that he has treated a garden of sandy loam, deeply underlaid with a porous gravel, exactly as he used to treat one of rich black earth with a clayey subsoil, and the result has been that about half his stuff has simply been burned out of the ground. Instead of raising his beet and lettuce beds above the general surface, no doubt he ought to have depressed them below it. Anyhow, his lettuce, which he used to find one of the easiest things to cultivate, refuses to germinate at all. After infinite pains about the selection of seeds—after committing pages of Peter Henderson's standard manual to memory and digging and pulverizing and stamping—he has three heads of very beautiful lettuce to reward his efforts. But his conscience is clear; his obedience to Henderson never flagged. True as the needle to the pole, he stamped on all his lettuce seeds because Henderson told him to stamp on them—and they all died. His beets and oyster plants developed a singular characteristic. All the seeds planted on the left-hand half of the bed grew beautifully, and all those planted on the right half of it failed. Same soil, same seed, same depth, same rolling, same conditions as to moisture—yet the right-hand seeds fail and the left-hand ones grow. This surprising fact cannot be sent to Darwin, because he is dead, but it ought to be taken into adequate account by some great naturalist or cosmologist. It takes more than an amateur gardener to account for it.

But the radishes! Having discovered that all the radish seeds he planted came up with great joyfulness and spontaneity, the amateur gardener planted a fresh lot as soon as each lot came up, so as to have a nice succession of radishes for the table through the season. The result has been simply paralyzing. The first crop of radishes seemed to be ready to eat about three weeks after they were planted. They were placed on the table, and though they seemed to be a trifle more peppery than was strictly according to Henderson, they were crisp, tender and refreshing. The amateur gardener's bosom swelled with joy as he ate these radishes, the fruit of his own labors and the reward of his own consummate skill. Having resolved to keep an account with his garden, the amateur enters up the ordinary cost of three bunches of radishes to its credit with great satisfaction.

In about three days more there are more radishes ready for the table. More are served. Then another lot comes on before those that preceded it are all harvested. Meantime the family appetite for radishes seems to pall a little, and dishes are carried away half filled. The amateur gardener puts out gentle hints as to the satisfaction that one takes when the choice results of his labors are appreciated in his own household. Then he gets an idea that people at the table are worrying down more radishes than they want, merely to please him. The iron has entered into his soul. Finally Betty comes running in from the garden all aglow and says, "I've been counting the radishes out there in the ground that are big enough to eat, and how many do you suppose there are?" "How many, dear?" "A hundred and eighteen."

And those hundred and eighteen radishes become a nightmare to the amateur gardener. He has already expressed an intention to bunch them up and send them around to his friends, but has been met with the chilly question when he proposed that, "But what about the pepperiness, my dear?" When one has set up as a gardener, the faintest suggestion of pepper about a radish is fatal to it as a gift article. Of course no "hot" radishes, no bitter cucumbers, no watery peas can be given away. "Really," the amateur gardener says to himself, extenuatingly, "these radishes are unjustly accused. Probably if they weren't ours we shouldn't suspect them of pepper at all. Probably they aren't a bit more peppery than a radish ought to be. I should like to send one of them to Henderson and hear what he thinks about it. But the mere suspicion of pepper spoils a radish to give away. It has to be perfect or it can't go." No doubt he might bunch them up and turn them over to the market man, but if the market man's customers should actually find them hot and the market man should say so to the amateur gardener the humiliation would be more than he could bear. And so, at last accounts, there were almost a hundred and eighteen radishes still in the ground at the amateur gardener's place, growing to a prodigious size and two or three more sowings coming forward very rapidly. Meantime the amateur has resolved to write to Henderson before another spring for a special treatise on the art of keeping pepper out of radishes.

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