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THE SPINNING WHEEL.

BY B. F. TAYLOR.

A white pine floor and low ceiled room,
A wheel and a reel and a great brown loom,
The windows out, and the world in bloom—

A pair of "swifts" in the corner, where
The grandmother sat in her rush wrought chair,
And pulled at the distaff's tangled hair;

And sang to herself as she spun the tow
While "the little wheel" ran so soft and low
As muffled brooks where the grasses grow
And lie one way with the water's flow.

As Christ's field lilies free from sin,
So she grew like them when she ceased to spin
Counted her "knots" and handed them in.

"The great wheel" rigged in its harness stands—
A three-legged thing with its spindle in bands—
And the slender spokes, like the willow wands
That spring so thick in the low wet lands,
Turn dense at the touch of a woman's hands.

As the wheel whirls swift, how rank they grow!
But how sparse and thin when the wheel runs slow,
Forward and backward and to and fro!

There's a heap of rolls like clouds in curl,
And a bright faced, springy, barefoot girl;
She gives a touch and a careless whirl.

She holds a roll in her shapely hand
That the sun has kissed and the wind has fanned,
And its mate obeys the wheel's command.

There must be wings on her rosy heel;
And there must be bees in the spindle steel!
A thousand spokes in the dizzy wheel!

Have you forgotten the left-breast knock
When you bagged the bee in the hollyhock,
And the angry burr of an ancient clock—

All ready to strike—came out of the mill,
Where covered with meal the rogue was still,
Till it made your thumb and finger thrill?

It is one, two, three—the roll is caught;
'Tis a backward step and the thread is taut,
A hurry of wheel and the roll is wrought!

'Tis one, two, three, and the yarn runs on,
And the spindle shapes like a white-pine cone,
As even and still as something grown.

The barefoot maiden follows the thread
Like somebody caught and tethered and led
Up to the buzz of the busy head.

With backward sweep and willowy bend
Monarch would borrow if maiden could lend,
She draws out the thread to the white wool's end,

From English sheep of the old-time farm,
With their legs as fair as a woman's arm,
And faces white as a girl's alarm.

She breaks her thread with an angry twang
Just as if at her touch a harp-string rang
And keyed to the quaint old song she sang

That came to a halt on her cherry lip,
While she tied one knot that never could slip,
And thought of another, when her ship—

All laden with dreams in splendid guise—
Should sail right out of the azure skies
And a lover bring with great brown eyes!

Ah, broad the day but her work was done—
Two "runs" by reel! She had twisted and spun
Her two score "knots" by set of sun,

With her one, two, three the wheel beside,
And the three, two, one of her backward glide,
So to and fro in calico pride
Till the bees went home and daytime died!

In apron white as the white sea foam
She gathered the wealth of her velvet gloom,
And railed it in with a tall back-comb.

She crushed the dew with her naked feet,
The track of the sun was a golden street,
The grass was cool and the air was sweet.

The girl gazed up at the mackerel sky,
And it looked like a pattern lifted high;
But she never dreamed of angels nigh.

And she spoke right out: "Do just see there!
What a blue and white for the clouded pair
I'm going to knit for my Sunday wear!"

The wheel is dead and the bees are gone,
And the girl is dressed in a silver lawn,
And her feet are shod with a golden dawn.

From a wind-swung tree that waves before
A shadow is dodging in at the door—
Flickering ghost on the white pine floor—

And the cat, unlearned in the shadow's law,
Just touched its edge with a velvet paw
To hold it still with an ivory claw!

But its spectral cloak is blown about,
And a moment more and the ghost is out,
And leaves us all in shadowy doubt.

If ever it fell on floor at all,
Or if ever it swung along the wall,
Or whether a shroud or a phantom shawl!

Oh, brow that the old-time morning kissed!
Good night, my girl of the double and twist
Oh, barefoot vision! Vanishing mist!

—Scribner's for July.

BABY SYLVESTER.

BY BRET HARTE.

It was at a little mining camp in the California Sierras that he first dawned upon me in all his grotesque sweetness.

I had arrived early in the morning, but not in time to intercept the friend who was the object of my visit. He had gone "prospecting"—so they told me on the river—and would not probably return until late in the afternoon. They could not say what direction he had taken; they could not suggest that I would be likely to find him if I followed. But it was the general opinion that I had better wait.

I looked around me. I was standing upon the bank of the river, and apparently the only other human beings in the world were my interlocutors, who were even then just disappearing from my horizon down the steep bank toward the river's dry bed. I approached the edge of the bank.

Where could I wait?

O, anywhere; down with them on the river bar, where they were working, if I liked! Or I could make myself at home in any of those cabins that I found lying round loose. Or, perhaps it would be cooler and pleasanter for me in my friend's cabin on the hill. Did I see those three large sugar pines? And, a little to the right, a canvass roof and chimney over the bushes? Well, that was my friend's,—that was Dick Sylvester's cabin. I could stake my horse in that little hollow, and just hang round there till he came. I would find some books in the shanty; I could amuse myself with them. Or I could play with the baby.

Do what?

But they had already gone. I leaned over the bank and called after their vanishing figures:

"What did you say I could do?"

The answer floated slowly up on the hot, sluggish air:

"Pla-a-y with the ba-by."

The lazy echoes took it up and tossed it languidly from hill to hill, until Bald Mountain opposite made some incoherent remark about the baby, and then all was still.

I must have been mistaken. My friend was not a man of family; there was not a woman within forty miles of the river camp; he never was so passionately devoted to children as to import a luxury so expensive. I must have been mistaken.

I turned my horse's head toward the hill. As we slowly climbed the narrow trail, the little settlement might have been some exhumed Pompeiian suburb, so deserted and silent were its habitations. The open doors plainly disclosed each rudely finished interior—the rough pine table, with the scant equipage of the morning meal still standing; the wooden bunk, with its tumbled and disheveled blankets. A golden lizard—the very genius of desolate stillness—had stopped breathless upon the threshold of one cabin; a squirrel peeped impudently into the window of another; a wookpecker, with the general flavor of undertaking which distinguishes that bird, withheld his sepulchral hammer from the coffin lid of the roof on which he was professionally engaged as we passed. For a moment I half regretted that I had not accepted the invitation to the river bed; but, the next moment, a breeze swept up the long, dark canon, and the waiting files of the pines beyond bent toward me in salutation. I think my horse understood as well as myself that it was the cabins that made the solitude human, and therefore unbearable, for he quickened his pace, and with a gentle trot brought me to the edge of the wood and the three pines that stood like videttes before the Sylvester outpost.

Unsaddling my horse in the little hollow, I unslung the long *riata* from the saddle bow, and, tethering him to a young sapling, turned toward the cabin. I had gone only a few steps when I heard a quick trot behind me, and poor Pomposo, with every fibre tingling with fear, was at my heels. I looked hurriedly around. The breeze had died away, and only an occasional breath from the deep-chested woods, more like a long sigh than any articulate sound, or the dry singing of a cicala in the heated canon, was to be heard. I examined the ground carefully for rattlesnakes, but in vain. Yet here was Pomposo shivering from his arched neck to his sensitive haunches, his very flanks pulsating with terror. I soothed him as well as I could, and then walked to the wood and peered into its dark recesses. The bright flash of a bird's wing, or the quick dart of a squirrel was all I saw. I confess it was with something of superstitous expectation that I again turned toward the cabin. A fairy child, attended by Titania and her train, lying in an expensive cradle, would not have surprised me; a Sleeping Beauty, whose awakening would have repeopled those solitudes with life and energy, I am afraid I began to confidently look for and would have kissed without hesitation.

But I found none of these. Here was the evidence of my friend's taste and refinement in the hearth swept scrupulously clean, in the picturesque arrangement of the fur skins that covered the floor and furniture, and the striped *serape** lying on the wooden couch. Here were the walls fancifully papered with illustrations from the London *News;* here was the wood-cut portrait of Mr. Emerson over the chimney, quietly framed with blue jays' winge; here were his few favorite books on the swinging shelf, and here, lying upon the couch, the latest copy of *Punch*. Dear Dick! The flour sack was sometimes empty, but the gentle satirist seldom missed his weekly visit.

I threw myself on the couch and tried to read. But I soon exhausted my interest in my friend's library, and lay there staring through the open door on the green hillside beyond. The breeze again sprang up, and a delicious cool, mixed with the rare incense of the woods, stole through the cabin. The slumbrous droning bumble-bees outside the canvas roof, the faint cawing of rooks on the opposite mountain, and the fatigue of my morning ride began to droop my eyelids. I pulled the serape over me as a precaution against the freshening mountain breeze, and in a few moments was asleep.

I do not remember how long I slept. I must have been conscious, however, during my slumber, of my inability to keep myself covered by the serape, for I awoke once or twice, clutching it with a desperate hand as it was disappearing over the foot of the couch. Then I became suddenly aroused to the fact that my efforts to retain it were resisted by some equally persistent force, and, letting it go, I was horrified at seeing it swiftly drawn under the couch. At this point I sat up completely awake; for immediately after, what seemed to be an exaggerated muff began to emerge from under the couch. Presently it appeared fully, dragging the serape after it. There was no mistaking it now—its was a baby bear—a mere suckling it was true, a helpless roll of fat and fur, but, unmistakably, a grizzly cub.

I can not recall anything more irresistibly ludicrous than its aspect as it slowly raised its small, wondering eyes to mine. It was so much taller on its haunches than its shoulders—its fore legs were so disproportionately small—that in walking its hind feet invariably took precedence. It was perpetually pitching forward over its pointed, inoffensive nose, and recovering itself always, after these involuntary somersaults, with the gravest astonishment. To add to its preposterous appearance, one of its hind feet was adorned by a shoe of Sylvester's, into which it had accidentally and inextricably stepped. As this somewhat impeded its first impulse to fly, it turned to me; and then, possibly recognizing in the stranger the same species as its master, it paused. Presently it slowly raised itself on its hind legs, and vaguely and deprecatingly waved a baby paw, fringed with little hooks of steel. I took the paw and shook it gravely. From that moment we were friends. The little affair of the *serape* was forgotten.

Nevertheless, I was wise enough to cement friendship by an act of delicate courtesy. Following the direction of his eyes, I had no difficulty in finding, on a shelf near the ridge-pole, the sugar box and the square lumps of white sugar that even the poorest miner is never without. While he was eating them I had time to examine him more closely. His body was a silky, dark, but exquisitely modulated gray, deepening to black in his paws and muzzle. His fur was excessively long, thick, and as soft as elder down; the cushions of flesh beneath perfectly infantine in their texture and contour. He was so very young that the palms of his half human feet were still tender as a baby's. Except for the bright blue, steely hooks, half sheathed in his little toes, there was not a single harsh outline or detail in his plump figure. He was as free from angles as one of Leda's offspring. Your caressing hand sank away in his fur and dreamy languor. To look at him long was an intoxication of the senses; to pat him was a wild delirium; to embrace him, an utter demoralization of the intellectual faculties.

When he had finished the sugar, he rolled out of the door with a half diffident, half inviting look in his eye, as if he expected me to follow. I did so, but the sniffing and snorting of the keen scented Pomposo in the hollow not only revealed the cause of his former terror, but decided me to take another direction. After a moment's hesitation, he concluded to go with me, although I am satisfied from a certain impish look in his eye, that he fully understood and rather enjoyed the fright of Pomposo. As he rolled along at my side, with a gait not unlike a drunken sailor, I discovered that his long hair concealed a leather collar around his neck, which bore for its legend the single word, "Baby!" I recalled the mysterious suggestion of the two miners.

This, then, was the "baby" with whom I was to "play." How we "played;" how Baby allowed me to roll him down hill, crawling and puffing up again each time, with perfect good humor; how he climbed a young sapling after my Panama hat, which I had "shied" into one of the topmost branches; how, after getting it, he refused to descend until it suited his pleasure; how, when he did come down, he persisted in walking about on three legs, carrying my hat, a crushed and shapeless mass, clasped to his breast with the remaining one; how I missed him at last, and finally discovered him seated on a table in one of the tenantless cabins, with a bottle of syrup between his paws, vainly endeavoring to extract its contents—these and other details of that eventful day I shall not weary the reader with now. Enough that, when Dick Sylvester returned, I was pretty well fagged out, and the baby was rolled up, an immense bolster at the foot of the couch, asleep. Sylvester's first words after our greeting were:

"Isn't he delicious?"

"Perfectly. Where did you get him?"

"Lying under his dead mother, five miles from here," said Dick, lighting his pipe. "Knocked her over at fifty yards; perfectly clean shot—never moved afterward! Baby crawled, scared but unhurt. She must have been carrying him in her mouth, and dropped him when she faced me, for he was not more than three days old, and not yet steady on his pins. He takes the only milk that comes to the settlement—brought up by Adams' express at seven o'clock every morning. They say he looks like me. Do you think so?" asked Dick, with perfect gravity, stroking his hay-colored mustachios and evidently assuming his best expression.

I took leave of the baby early the next morning in Sylvester's cabin, and, out of respect to Pomposo's feelings, rode by without any postscript of expression. But the night before I had made Sylvester solemnly swear that, in the event of any separation between himself and baby, it should revert to me. "At the same time," he had added, "it's only fair to say that I don't think of dying just yet, old fellow, and I don't know of anything else that would part the cub and me."

Two months after this conversation, as I was turning over the morning's mail at my office in San Francisco, I noticed a letter bearing Sylvester's familiar hand. But it was post marked "Stockton," and I opened it with some anxiety at once. Its contents were as follows:

O, Frank! Don't you remember what we agreed upon anent the baby? Well, consider me as dead for the next six months, or gone where a cub can't follow me—East. I know you love the baby; but do you think, dear boy—now, really, do you think—you could be a father to it? Consider this well. You are young, thoughtless, well-meaning enough; but dare you take upon yourself the functions of guide, genius or guardian to one so young and guileless? Could you be the mentor to this Telemachus? Think of the temptations of a metropolis. Look at the question well, and let me know speedily, for I've got him as far as this place, and he's kicking up an awful row in the hotel yard, and rattling his chain like a maniac. Let me know by telegraph at once. SYLVESTER.

P. S.—Of course he's grown a little, and doesn't take things always as quietly as he did. He dropped rather heavily on two of Watson's "purps" last week, and snatched old Watson himself bald-headed for interfering. You remember Watson; for an intelligent man, he knows very little of California fauna. How are you fixed for bears on Montgomery street—I mean in regard to corrals and things? S.

P. D. S.—He's got some new tricks. The boys have been teaching him to put up his hands with them. He slings an ugly left. S.

I am afraid that my desire to possess myself of Baby overcame all other considerations, and I telegraphed an affirmative at once to Sylvester. When I reached the lodgings late that afternoon my landlady was awaiting me with a telegram. It was two lines from Sylvester:

"All right. Baby goes down on night boat. Be a father to him. S."

It was due, then, at one o'clock that night. For a moment I was staggered at my own precipitation. I had as yet made no preparations—had said nothing to my landlady about her new guest. I expected to arrange everything in time, and now, through Sylvester's indecent haste, that time had been shortened twelve hours.

Something, however, must be done at once. I turned to Mrs. Brown. I had great reliance in her maternal instincts; I had that still greater reliance, common to our sex, in the general tender-heartedness of pretty women. But I confess I was alarmed. Yet, with a feeble smile, I tried to introduce the subject with classical ease and lightness. I even said, "If Shakespeare's Athenian clown, Mrs. Brown, believed that a lion among ladies was a dreadful thing, what must——" But here I broke down, for Mrs. Brown, with the awful intuition of her sex, I saw at once was more occupied with my manner than my speech. So I tried a business brusquerie, and, placing the telegram in her hand, said hurriedly, "We must do something about this at once. It's perfectly absurd; but he will be here to-night. Beg thousand pardons, but business prevented my speaking before——" and paused, out of breath and courage.

Mrs. Brown read the telegram gravely, lifted her pretty eyebrows, turned the paper over and looked on the other side, and then, in a remote and chilling voice, asked me if she understood me to say that the mother was coming also.

"O, dear, no," I exclaimed with considerable relief; "the mother is dead, you know. Sylvester—that is my friend, who sent this—shot her when the baby was only three days old ——." But the expression of Mrs. Brown's face at this moment was so alarming that I saw that nothing but the fullest explanation would save me. Hastily, and I fear not very coherently, I told her all.

She relaxed sweetly. She said I had frightened her with my talk about lions. Indeed, I think my picture of poor baby—albeit a trifle highly colored—touched her motherly heart. She was even a little vexed at what she called Sylvester's "hard-heartedness." Still, I was not without some apprehension. It was two months since I had seen him, and Sylvester's vague allusion to his "slinging an ugly left" pained me. I looked at sympathetic little Mrs. Brown, and the thought of Watson's pups covered me with guilty confusion.

Mrs. Brown had agreed to sit up with me until he arrived. One o'clock came, but no Baby. Two o'clock—three o'clock—passed. It was almost four when there was a wild clatter of horses' hoofs outside, and with a jerk a wagon stopped at the door. In an instant I had opened it and confronted a stranger. Almost at the same moment, the horses attempted to run away with the wagon.

The stranger's appearance was, to say the least, disconcerting. His clothes were badly torn and frayed; his linen sack hung from his shoulders like a herald's apron; one of his hands was bandaged, his face scratched, and there was no hat on his disheveled head. To add to the general effect, he had evidently sought relief from his woes in drink, and he swayed from side to side as he clung to the door handle, and, in a very thick voice, stated that he had "suthin" for me outside. When he had finished, the horses made another plunge.

Mrs. Brown thought they must be frightened at something.

"Frightened!" laughed the stranger, with bitter irony. "Oh no! Hossish ain't frightened! On'y ran away four timesh comin' here. Oh no! Nobody's frightened. Everythin's all ri'. Ain't it, Bill?" he said, addressing the driver. "On'y been overboard twish; knocked down a hatchway once. Thash nothin! On'y two men unner the doctor's han's at Stockton. Thash nothin'! Six hunner dollarsh cover all dammish."

I was too much disheartened to reply, but moved toward the wagon. The stranger eyed me with an astonishment that almost sobered him.

"Do you reckon to tackle that animile yourself?" he asked, as he surveyed me from head to foot.

I did not speak, but with an appearance of boldness I was far from feeling, walked to the wagon and called, "Baby!"

"All ri'. Cash loose them straps, Bill, and stan' clear."

The straps were cut loose, and Baby—the remorseless, the terrible—quietly tumbled to the ground, and, rolling to my side, rubbed his foolish head against me.

I think the astonishment of the two men was beyond any vocal expression. Without a word the drunken stranger got into the wagon and drove away.

And Baby? He had grown, it is true, a trifle larger, but he was thin, and bore the marks of evident ill usage. His beautiful coat was matted and unkempt, and his claws—those bright steel hooks—had been ruthlessly pared to the quick. His eyes were furtive and restless, and the old expression of stupid good humor had changed to one of intelligent distrust. His intercourse with mankind had evidently quickened his intellect without broadening his moral nature.

I had great difficulty in keeping Mrs. Brown from smothering him in blankets and ruining his digestion with the delicacies of her larder; but I at last got him completely rolled up in the corner of my room and asleep. I lay awake some time later with plans for his future. I finally determined to take him to Oakland, where I had built a little cottage and always spent my Sundays, the very next day. And, in the midst of a rosy picture of domestic felicity, I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was broad day. My eyes at once sought the corner where Baby had been lying. But he was gone. I sprang from the bed, looked under it, searched the closet, but in vain. The door was still locked; but there were the marks of his blunted claws upon the sill of the window, that I had forgotten to close. He had evidently escaped that way—but where? The window opened upon the balcony, to which the only other entrance was through the hall. He must be still in the house.

My hand was already upon the bell-rope, but I stayed it in time. If he had not made himself known, why should I disturb the house? I dressed myself hurriedly, and slipped into the hall. The first object that met my eyes was a boot lying upon the stairs. It bore the marks of Baby's teeth; and, as I looked along the hall, I saw too plainly that the usual array of freshly-blackened boots and shoes before the lodgers' doors was not there. As I ascended the stairs I found another, but with the blacking carefully licked off. On the third floor were two or three more boots slightly mouthed; but at this point Baby's taste for blacking had evidently palled. A little further on was a ladder, leading to an open scuttle. I mounted the ladder, and reached the flat roof, that formed a continuous level over the row of houses to the corner of the street. Behind the chimney on the very last roof something was lurking. It was the fugitive baby. He was covered with dust, and dirt, and fragments of glass. But he was sitting on his hind legs, and was eating an enormous slab of peanut candy, with look of mingled guilt and infinite satisfaction. He even, I fancied, slightly stroked his stomach with his disengaged fore paw, as I approached. He knew that I was looking for him, and the expression of his eye said plainly, "The past, at least, is secure."

I hurried him with the evidence of his guilt back to the scuttle, and descended on tip-toe to the floor beneath. Providence favored us; I met no one on the stairs, and his own cushioned tread was inaudible. I think he was conscious of the dangers of detection, for he even forebore to breathe, or much less chew the last mouthful he had taken; and he skulked at my side, with the syrup dropping from his motionless jaws. I think he would have silently choked to death just then, for my sake; and it was not until I had reached my room again, and threw myself panting on the sofa that I saw how near strangulation he had been. He gulped once or twice, apologetically, and then walked to the corner of his own accord and rolled himself up like an immense sugar plum, sweating remorse and treacle at every pore.

I locked him in when I went to breakfast, when I found Mrs. Brown's lodgers in a state of intense excitement over certain mysterious events of the night before, and the dreadful revelations of the morning. It appeared that burglars had entered the block from the scuttles; that, being suddenly alarmed, they had quitted our house without committing any depredations, dropping even the boots they had collected in the halls; but that a desperate attempt had been made to force the till in the confectioner's shop on the corner, and that the glass show cases had been ruthlessly smashed. A courageous servant in No. 4 had seen a masked burglar, on his hands and knees, attempting to enter their scuttle, but on her shouting, "Away wid yees!" he instantly fled.

I sat through the recital with cheeks that burned uncomfortably; nor was I the less embarrassed on raising my eyes to meet Mrs. Brown's fixed curiously and mischievously on mine. As soon as I could make my escape from the table I did so; and, running rapidly up stairs, sought refuge from any possible inquiry in my own room. Baby was still asleep in the corner. It would not be safe to remove him until the lodgers had gone down town; and I was revolving in my mind the expediency of keeping him until night veiled his obtrusive eccentricity from the public eye, when there came a cautious tap at my door. I opened it. Mrs. Brown slipped in quietly, closed the door softly, stood with her back against it and her hand on the knob, and beckoned me mysteriously toward her. Then she asked me in a low voice:

"Is hair dye poisonous?"

I was too confounded to speak.

"O! do you know what I mean," she said, impatiently. "This stuff." She produced suddenly from behind her a bottle with a Greek label—so long as to run two or three times spirally around it from top to bottom. "He says it isn't a dye; it's a vegetable preparation for invigorating ——."

"Who says?" I asked, despairingly

"Why, Mr Parker, of course," said Mrs. Brown, severely, with the air of having repeated the name a great many times—"the old gentleman in the room above. The simple question I want to ask," she continued, with the calm manner of one who has just convicted another of gross ambiguity of language, "is only this: If some of this stuff were put in a saucer and left carelessly on the table and a child, or a baby, or a cat, or any young animal should come in the window and drink it up—a whole saucer full—because it had a sweet taste, would it be likely to hurt them?"

I cast an anxious look at Baby, sleeping peacefully in the corner, and a very grateful one at Mrs. Brown, and said I didn't think it would.

"Because," said Mrs. Brown, loftily, as she opened the poor, "I thought if it was poisonous, remedies might be used in time. Because," she added suddenly, abandoning her lofty manner and wildly rushing to the corner, with a frantic embrace of the unconscious Baby, "because, if any nasty stuff should turn its boofui hair a horrid green or a naughty pink, it would break its own muzzer's heart, it would!"

But, before I could assure Mrs. Brown of the inefficiency of hair dye as an internal application, she had darted from the room.

That night, with the secrecy of defaulters, Baby and I decamped from Mrs. Brown's. Distrusting the too emotional nature of that noble animal, the horse, I had recourse to a hand cart, drawn by a stout Irishman, to convey my charge to the ferry. Even then, Baby refused to go unless I walked by the cart, and at times rode in it.

"I wish," said Mrs. Brown, as she stood by the door wrapped in an immense shawl and saw us depart, "I wish it looked less solemn, less like a pauper's funeral."

I must admit that as I walked by the cart that night I felt very much as if I were accompanying the remains of some humble friend to his last resting place; and that, when I was obliged to ride in it, I never could entirely convince myself that I was not helplessly overcome by liquor, or the victim of an accident, en route to the hospital. But at last we reached the ferry. On the boat I think no one discovered Baby except a drunken man, who approached me to ask for a light for his cigar, but who suddenly dropped it and fled in dismay to the gentlemen's cabin, where his incoherent ravings were luckily taken for the earlier indications of delirium tremens.

It was nearly midnight when I reached my little cottage on the outskirts of Oakland; and it was with a feeling of relief and security that I entered, locked the door, and turned him loose in the hall, satisfied that henceforward his depredations would be limited to my own property. He was very quiet that night, and after he had tried to mount the hat-rack, under the mistaken impression that it was intended for his own gymnastic exercise, and kicked all the hats off, he went peaceably to sleep on the rug.

In a week, with the exercise afforded by the run of a large, carefully boarded inclosure, he recovered his health, strength, spirits, and much of his former beauty. His presence was unknown to my neighbors, although it was noticeable that horses invariably "shied" in passing to the windward side of my house, and that the baker and milkman had great difficulty in the delivery of their wares in the morning, and indulged in unseemly and unnecessary profanity in so doing.

At the end of the week, I determined to invite a few friends to see the Baby, and to that purpose wrote a number of formal invitations. After decanting at some length on the great expense and danger attending his capture and training, I offered a programme of the performance of the "Infant Phenomenon of Sierran Solitudes," drawn up in the highest professional profusion of alliteration and capital letters. A few extracts will give the reader some idea of his educational progress:

1. He will, rolled up in a Round Ball, roll down the Wood Shed, Rapidly, illustrating His manner of Escaping from His Enemy in His Native Wilds.

2. He will Ascend the Well Pole, and remove from the Very Top a Hat, and as much of the Crown and Brim thereof as May be Permitted.

3. He will perform a pantomime, descriptive of the Conduct of the Big Bear, The Middle-Sized Bear and The Little Bear of the Popular Nursery Legend.

4. He will shake his chain Rapidly, showing his Manner of striking Dismay and Terror in the Breasts of Wanderers in Ursine Wildernesses.

The morning of the exhibition came, but an hour before the performance the wretched Baby was missing. The Chinese cook could not indicate his whereabouts. I searched the premises thoroughly, and then, in despair, took my hat and hurried out into the narrow lane that led toward the open fields and the woods beyond. But I found no trace nor track of Baby Sylvester. I returned, after an hour's fruitless search, to find my guests already assembled on the rear veranda. I briefly recounted my disappointment, my probable loss, and begged their assistance.

"Why," said a Spanish friend, who prided himself on his accurate knowledge of English, to Barker, who seemed to be trying vainly to rise from his reclining position on the veranda, "why do you not disengage yourself from the veranda of our friend? and why, in the name of Heaven, do you attach to yourself so much of this thing, and make to yourself such unnecessary contortion? Ah," he continued, suddenly withdrawing one of his own feet from the veranda with an evident effort, "I am myself attached! Surely it is something here!"

It evidently was. My guests were all rising with difficulty—the floor of the veranda was covered with some glutinous substance. It was—syrup.

I saw it all in a flash. I ran to the barn. The keg of "golden syrup," purchased only the day before, lay empty upon the floor. There were sticky tracks all over the inclosure, but still no Baby.

"There's something moving the ground over there by that pile of dirt," said Barker.

He was right: the earth was sinking in one corner of the inclosure like an earthquake. I approached cautiously. I saw, what I had not before noticed, that the ground was thrown up, and there, in the middle of an immense grave-like cavity, crouched Baby Sylvester, still digging, and slowly but surely sinking from sight in a mass of dust and clay.

What were his intentions? Whether he was stung by remorse, and wished to hide himself from my reproachful eyes, or whether he was simply trying to dry his syrup-besmeared coat, I never shall know, for that day, alas! was his last with me.

He was pumped upon for two hours, at the end of which time he still yielded a thin treacle. He was then taken and carefully enwrapped in blankets and locked up in the storeroom. The next morning he was gone! The lower portion of the window sash and pane were gone too. His successful experiments on the fragile texture of glass at the confectioner's, on the first day of his entrance to civilization, had not been lost upon him. His first essay at combining cause and effect ended in his escape.

Where he went, where he hid, who captured him if he did not succeed in reaching the foot hills beyond Oakland, even the offer of a large reward, backed by the efforts of an intelligent police, could not discover. I never saw him again from that day until—

Did I see him? I was in a horse car on Sixth avenue a few days ago when the horses suddenly became unmanageable and left the track for the sidewalk, amid the oaths and execrations of the driver. Immediately in front of the car a crowd had gathered around two performing bears and a showman. One of the animals, thin, emaciated and the mere wreck of his native strength, attracted my attention. I endeavored to attract his. He turned a pair of bleared, sightless eyes in my direction, but there was no sign of recognition. I leaned from the car window and called, softly, "Baby!" But he did not heed. I closed the window. The car was just moving on when he suddenly turned and, either by accident or design, thrust a callous paw through the glass.

"It's worth $1 50 to put in a new pane," said the conductor, "If folks will play with bears!"—*St. Nicholas.*

*A fine Mexican blanket used as an outer garment for riding.

Mrs. Audubon.

In a sermon preached on the twenty-eighth of June, by Rev. Charles A. Stoddard, at the funeral of the widow of the distinguished naturalist, Audubon, who came to her death at Louisville, Kentucky, we find the following excellent sketch of her life and character:

Lucy Bakewell was the daughter of William Bakewell, an English gentlemen, who had bought a tract of land on the Schuylkill river, and who lived on his estate. The estate which young Audubon received from his father adjoined that of Mr. Bakewell, and the intimacy which naturally resulted from association between young people thus placed led to friendship. Lucy Bakewell taught the young Frenchman the English language, and received from him drawing lessons in return. In due time they became deeply attached to each other, and, after delays and hindrances, were happily married on the eighth of April, 1808. She left her father's house at once with her husband, and began a remarkable and eventful career by a journey through Pennsylvania to Pittsburg, and down the Ohio river in a flatboat to Louisville. From that time onward for more than thirty years she had no permanent home, yet her spirits never flagged, weariness never produced discontent, isolation from friends never chilled the warmth of her affections, nor did the independent life to which she was compelled produce selfishness and misanthropy. She had given her heart with her hand to her husband, and she identified herself entirely with his pursuits, his interests and his hopes. She accompanied him in his wanderings, encouraged him in trials, and when misfortunes overtook him she bent to the task of relieving him with an active intellect and a strong will. In order to obtain money to educate their children and leave him free to pursue his studies in natural history she took a place as governess in a family in New Orleans, and afterward in Natchez.

When her husband was anxious to go to Europe in order to perfect himself in the use of colors, and could not, for lack of funds, she established a family school at Bayou Sara and earned the needful money while she also educated her two children. When, in the face of many obstacles, and contrary to the advice of his friends, who regarded him as a madman, Audubon determined to pursue ornithology as his profession, his wife determined that his genius should have the opportunity which it craved. She gave him not only words of encouragement, but devoted several thousand dollars, which she had earned by teaching, to help forward the publication of his drawings and insure his success. Twice she went with her husband upon his voyages to England, and traveled with him while he obtained subscribers to his great work. For years she bore the pain of long separation patiently, stimulating his enthusiasm by her letters, while she provided for their children by her labors, and rejoiced in the triumph which she had aided him to achieve without a thought of the struggles and privations which it had cost her. And when the keen eye that had caught so quickly each shade of the plumage of birds grew dim, and the dexterous fingers could no longer ply the pencil, when "silent, patient sorrow filled a broken heart," and paralysis had weakened body and mind, then for years, in the beautiful home which their mutual efforts had provided, his wife read to him with untiring faithfulness and Christian serenity, till the last moment of recognition and departure came together.

After the death of her husband Madame Audubon did not sink into inactivity and despondency. She interested herself in the children for whose training she had done so much, and gave to children's children the benefit of a regular and systematic education. Her days were filled with active efforts for the good of others, and no rust dimmed the mind to which intellectual activity had become a constant delight. She loved to read, to study and to teach; she knew how to gain the attention of the young, and to fix knowledge in their minds. "If I can hold the mind of a child to a subject for five minutes he will remember what I teach him," she once remarked. Acting upon this principle, she was as successful at three score and ten years in imparting knowledge as she had been in early life, when she taught in Louisiana.

Mme. Audubon interested herself in all that pertained to the welfare of the neighborhood in which she lived. Although it was not without a pang that she saw her sylvan home invaded by the growth of the city, and all old associations broken up, she did not treat those who came to live near her as strangers. The death of her husband was at length followed by the death of both of her sons, who had been the colaborers and traveling companions of their father; the fortune which had rewarded their mutual efforts was reduced by unfortunate investments, and many trials and burdens pressed upon her declining years; but she met her trials without shrinking, and bore her burdens patiently. Cheered by the society of the intelligent and the good, with undiminished fondness for intellectual pursuits, and still surrounded by descendants who honored and loved her, she occupied her time in preparing a biography of her husband, which is at once a noble tribute to his memory and a monument of her own literary ability and industry. The last years of Audubon's life had been saddened by the loss of sight, and partial blindness now cut her off from reading. But as she had been eyes to the blind, so now a granddaughter, with filial affection, supplied her loss of sight, and read to her for hours from books of travel and valuable literature, with daily portions of the Word of God.

When it was contended by English barristers that no man should be admitted to the bar who had not an independent landed property, many years before Mr. Benjamin took his carpet sack to the Queen's bench, Curran promptly asked, "How many acres make a wiseacre?"

A TOAD.

BY ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN.

Close by the basement doorstep
A representative toad
Has made, all the sultry summer,
His quiet and cool abode;
And the way he bumps and bounces
About on the area stones
Would break every bone in his body,
Except that he has no bones.

When a man is cringing and abject
And fawns for a selfish end,
Why they should call him a toady
What mortal can comprehend?
Since for resolute independence,
Despising the courtier's code,
And freedom from mean ambitions,
There's nobody like the toad.

I know how strongly against him
Some popular whimsies go;
But the toad is never vicious,
Nor silly, nor stupid, nor slow.
Stupid! Perhaps you never
Noticed his jewel eyes?
Slow? or his tongue's red lightning
Striking the darting flies?

Oh, but the mouth he carries!
To make its dimensions clear,
One longs to describe it briefly,
As reaching from ear to ear;
But that no professor of reptiles
Is able (so far as appears
In books upon kindred subjects)
To locate bathracian ears.

No matter how stern and solemn
The markings about his eyes,
The width of his mouth preserves him
From wearing too grave a guise;
It gives him the look (no matter
How sad he may be the while
Or deep in profound abstraction)
Of smiling a chronic smile.

His ponderous locomotion,
Though brimful of nerve and force,
And well enough here in the area,
Wouldn't do for a trotting course;
Too modest to run for Congress,
Too honest for Wall street's strife,
His principles all unfit him
For aught but a virtuous life.

A hole in the ground contents him,
So little he asks of fate;
Philosopher under a dock leaf,
He sits like a king in state.
Should a heedless footstep mash him,
In gravel absorbed and blent,
He never complains or grumbles—
He knows it was accident.

No drudging scribe in a sanctum,
No writer of prose or rhyme,
Gets through with so much hard thinking
In the course of a summer time;
And if sometimes he jumps at conclusions,
He does it with accurate aim
And after mature reflection—
Would all of us did the same!

But what will be do this winter,
In the wind and snow and hail,
With his poor, soft, unclad body
Unsheltered by wings or tail?
He can not go south, poor fellow,
In search of a milder air,
For spring would be back triumphant
Before he was half-way there!

But what are his plans for the future,
Or where he intends to go,
Or what he is weighing and planning,
Are things we shall never know.
He winks if you ask him a question,
And keeps his own counsel well;
For in fact, like the needy knife-grinder,
He has never a story to tell!

—St. Nicholas.

The True Story of Acadia.

Whoever chances to be in central or eastern Maine at this season of the year witnesses the annual incursion of a foreign people, says the Portland *Press*. Along all the highways come strange little wooden carts without springs, drawn by tough little Canadian horses, and loaded down with chattering Frenchmen till no part of the structure is visible but the wheels. These people who come every year from the St. François and the other French settlements in the province of Quebec to help the Yankee farmers cut their hay, are for the most part incredibly ignorant and dirty; they have a certain Gallic aptness for the use of strangely involved and complicated oaths that excites the envy of Americans who, in general, are limited to the straightforward Anglo-Saxon oath "with its three terrific specifications." But they are a harmless folk, less quarrelsome than the Irish, more picturesque than the Germans, and much less intelligent than either. Many of these people, as well as those who inhabit the rapid growing French settlements at Waterville, Lewiston and other Maine towns, are descendants of the hapless Acadians whose removal from Nova Scotia forms the subject of Longfellow's "Evangeline." If this be so, there has been a great change in the manners and habits of the neat and frugal Norman-French of the "beautiful village of Grand Pre," since the barbarous removal from their old homes. They have also increased and multiplied, in a manner well calculated to excite the wonder of the unprolific American stock, for it was stated at the recent meeting of the French Canadians in Quebec that no less than 500,000 of them had emigrated to the United States, and it was proposed to lure them back by the offer of a land bounty.

Here are the poor lost children of the Acadians, for instance, right before our eyes, and who can tell anything of their sad, romantic story since their dispersion in 1755? Hardly anybody in the world—perhaps nobody in the world but "W. G." the Hon. William Gould, of Windham, now one of our State Senators. By dint of long and laborious research, prosecuted in libraries and in the course of visits to the old Acadian homesteads, he knows the historical side of their story as well as Longfellow knows the poetical side. With his usual good luck, he has come into possession of a genuine treasure-trove, nothing less than the journal of an officer of one of the English vessels, kept during the trip from Grand Pre to Georgia with the captive French on board. This, with other journals and log books, also in his possession, together with the traditions of the descendants of the Acadians, a settlement of whom yet remains in Nova Scotia with all the original habits and dress, will enable so enthusiastic and accomplished a historian as Mr. Gould to execute successfully his project, which is to give us "a description of the Acadians or neutral French, and a history of their removal from their homes on the Bay of Fundy," together with some account of the condition of their descendants in the United States.

The true story will be found stranger than fiction. The people were more numerous than is generally supposed, numbering 18,000 in three or four districts, and 2000 at Grand Pre alone. They were kept ignorant of their fate till the moment of their captivity, which was simultaneous in all the districts. They were allured to labor at the gathering in of their crops, which were secretly allotted to the use of their captors. The 500 men of Grand Pre, like those of the other districts, were separated from their wives and children, who went in separate ships, and most of the families were never after reunited. From the decks of the ships at anchor they witnessed the burning of their villages before sailing. It is the log-book of one of these vessels that, after a quiet sleep of 120 years in some garret, has fallen into right hands. Brigadier Preble, of Portland, father of the "old Commodore," was second in command of the expedition.

Assassination as a Fine Art.

Since the Persian Sheik, known as the "Old Man of the Mountains," in the eleventh century, carried on the trade of assassination by wholesale from his stronghold in the heighths of Lebanon, down to the present time, mankind have instinctively branded the act of killing men suddenly and by stealth as a great aggravation of the offense of murder. Even when the killing in open combat, face to face, would be deemed in a degree excusable or even justifiable, to stab one behind his back or shoot him in the dark is universally regarded with abhorrence as unmanly and dishonorable. And yet history proves that the crime of assassination prevails most in those countries where human life is held of little value, and where the knife and the pistol are ready to be drawn both in the street and in public resorts at any trifling provocation. In Italy and Spain, where the dagger and stiletto were a part of a gentleman's daily outfit not long since, and where the code of chivalry has hitherto ruled like a rod of iron, professional assassins can be employed to take an enemy's life for a moderate compensation.

Evidently it is not the tendency of the code of the duelist or of the street fighter to cultivate and foster a spirit of genuine manly courage. We do not say that a professional duelist, or even the desperado who is always ready for an affray in a barroom or at the race track with his knife and revolver, would stoop to assassination. Far from it. There are many such turbulent spirits who would shudder at the thought of stealing on an unsuspecting enemy and suddenly taking his life without a moment's warning. But we do assert the tendency of their example and influence is to breed a contempt for human life in many of the weaker and more depraved spirits, who always follow the worst models and improve on their vices the wrong way, and see as little harm in assassinating a man as in shooting a squirrel. A Vicksburg paper gives an account of an infamous affair which took place recently in that State. A physician who had been boarding with a widow incurred the dislike of her son, who ordered him to leave the house. The sequel of the story is thus told:

"Dr. Robinson removed to another boarding house and remained there until a few weeks ago, when he returned to Mrs. Rabb's. He was soon after confined to his bed by sickness, and did not stir out of his room until soon after nightfall on Tuesday, when he stepped out into the yard and walked around the corner of the house. A few moments after he descried a dark figure in the shrubbery, but before he could discern its outlines there was a vivid flash, a loud report, and he fell to the ground mortally wounded, fifteen or twenty buckshot having taken effect in his thigh and abdomen, some of them passing entirely through his body. Another shot was fired immediately after the first, but the helpless victim had already reeled and fallen to the ground, and the shot lodged in the side of the house, just above his head. Some half hour expired before any one discovered the condition or came to the rescue of Dr. Robinson, and when they did come they found him lying on the ground bleeding and dying. He was conveyed into the house and surgical attendance summoned, but his wounds were of such a character that human skill could avail him nothing."

Dastardly acts like this will inevitably be multiplied in every community where men take revenge in their own hands in contempt of law. There is no greater mistake than the belief entertained by many that the law of private revenge and the resort to the redress of the knife and pistol tend to elevate the standard of honor and vindicate the spirit of genuine courage.—*Louisville Commercial.*

A Wonderful Woman.

There is at present occupying one of the cells in the Tombs a woman of about twenty-nine years of age, remarkably prepossessing in appearance and gifted with accomplishments and talents which, if they had been correctly applied, would, no doubt, have given her a brilliant position in society, instead of a gloomy cell inside of four walls. The charge against this young woman, who has all the manners of refined society, is that of grand larceny, preferred by General Philip D. Roddy, of Alabama, a citizen well known in this city and railroad management throughout the cotton States. On the ninth of June last General Roddy appeared before Justice Morgan at Jefferson Market and made complaint against the accused, charging her stealing an optical instrument known as an opera glass, valued at $15 50, and seven gold coins of the currency of Great Britain, in all valued at $50. In answer to this charge the accused answered in a quiet way:

"My legal name is Carlotta Frances Roddy. I am twenty-nine years of age and I was born in Warren county, New Jersey. I have no residence—my husband turned me out of his. I have no occupation. I am not guilty of the charge."

This was rather a startling announcement to make in open court, but Carlotta was committed in default of $1000 bail, and the grand jury, of which Hugh Auchincloss was foreman, brought in an indictment against her, and a few days since she appeared before the bar of the General Sessions and pleaded not guilty to the charge, and now is awaiting her trial. The theft was said to have been committed at the residence of General Roddy, in Jersey City, and it is said that the trial of the prisoner will involve persons well known to the community who have been foolish enough to get themselves entangled in the meshes of this woman.

The real name of the accused is said to be Mary F. Shotwell, and by that name she was known when she made her debut in this city at French's Hotel, and hiring apartments, appeared in company with a Chicago detective, who came on with her to recover some railroad bonds, which were said to have been taken away from her by a man about town named Brooks, whose arrest she caused. The bonds were of the railroad company with which General Roddy was connected, and they were taken from Brooks and held to await developments by Superintendent Kelso. While at French's Hotel, this woman, who is a dark and languishing brunette, gave her name as Shotwell, and held various interviews with the reporters, in which she represented herself as a rich widow, and then again as a lobbyist at Washington for some invention; and, in fact, she related so many stories of herself that it was hard to tell where she came from or what she was.

One thing was clearly evident, however, and that was that she had great command of language, and could talk three or four of the stronger sex "out of their boots;" it seemed from her manner that she was generally under the influence of some strong narcotic, her eyes were gifted with a strange and unnatural brilliancy, and she talked wildly at times of her influence in the district attorney's office and the power she could bring to bear in General Grant and other high functionaries at Washington. There was an examination before a well known police magistrate, at that time in the Tombs, and the Chicago detective, it is said, played the part of the "Heathen Chinee" and outwitted the Central Office police magistrate and all the officials about the court. After this she disappeared, and now, after the lapse of nearly a year, she again appears at the bar of the General Sessions to await this last charge preferred by a gentleman whom she asserts is her husband. At any rate she is a wonderfully mysterious woman and very unlike the general run of her sex who appear in police courts.—*New York Herald.*

The Snow Plant of the Sierras.

One of the grandest objects, says the San Francisco *Bulletin*, which meets the eye of the traveler in our mountains is the exquisite plant, the snow plant of the Sierras, the sarcodes sanguinea of John Tegrey, the botanist. It is an inhabitant only of the higher Sierras, being rarely found below an altitude of 4000 feet, and its glorious crimson spike of flowers may be seen early in May, forcing itself through the snows which at that period cling about the sides of our pine forests. The portion of the plant which is visible above the soil is a bright rosy crimson in color, and presents the strongest contrast to the dark green of the pines and the shimmer of the snow. Its root is succulent, thick and abundantly free of moisture, attaching itself to the roots of other plants, principally to the species of the pine family. Hence it is among those curious members of the vegetable world which are known to botanists as parasites, and is consequently entirely incapable of cultivation. The deer are extremely fond of it, and it is not an uncommon circumstance to find a number of the plants uprooted and robbed of the fleshy part of their underground growth by these animals. It belongs to the natural order Orobanchacea, and is met with through the whole of the Sierra region, becoming rarer as we approach the south.

Steep Charges.

The *News* has been shown a bill of warehouse charges by the Galveston Wharf Company which in some countries would be considered tolerably steep. The party so charged protested against the amount of the bill, but he had no recourse but to pay it. There were thirteen packages of household goods, mostly small, upon which the freight from New Orleans to Galveston, by the Morgan line steamer Clinton, amounted to $3 25. The goods were stored one night in the company's warehouse, and for performing this service the owner of the goods was presented with a bill of $2 65 before he could remove his effects. Add fifty cents, the amount of wharfage, and we have a bill of $3 15 incurred at the Galveston wharf, or within ten cents of what it cost to transport the goods from New Orleans to this city. Comment is unnecessary. This may be business, but it is business with a vengeance, and pursued energetically will crack the back of "natural advantages" in course of time. It is to be hoped that there is some mistake about this matter, but we have the evidence in black and white before us as we write.—*Galveston News.*

The paternal achres on which no family pride is based are the old man's corns.