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### THE NISKAYUNE SHAKERESS.

It was a gentle Shakeress,
Just in from Niskayune,
Five miles beyond the turnpike gate,
One pleasant afternoon.

Aloft upon the wagon box
She sat in virgin state;
The spirit moved me to draw near
And help with her debate.

I asked of her the price of eggs:
She raised her eyes, and then—
"If brother Jesse were but here,"
Then she looked down again.

She raised her eyes once more, at length.
"You seem a modest youth"—
"Too much so for my good," I said:
"My greatest fault, in truth."

"Oh, say not so," she made reply.
"The fault becomes thee well;
The heart that harbors such a fault
Is virtue's citadel."

"Oh, heed," said she, "the earnest call
That comes to such as thee.
And be a bright and shining light
In our community."

Before my eyes a vision passed:
I stood as in a swoon,
And saw myself in Shaker garb
At peaceful Niskayune.

My hair cut short upon my brow,
In long, straight locks behind;
A broad brimmed hat upon my head,
And nothing on my mind.

I saw the barn-like meeting house—
It was the Sabbath day—
A crowd from Albany and Troy,
But I had come to stay.

I saw myself upon the floor,
A leader in the dance;
First on the heel, then on the toe,
I saw myself advance.

Then Brother Jesse spoke awhile,
And when he reached the close
I sang an edifying strain—
I sang it through my nose.

The vision passed, and then I stood
Once more upon Broadway.
"Wilt go?" inquired the Shakeress;
"Wilt go!" I faltered "Nay!"

A tear drop trickled down my cheek,
And fell upon my hand;
A sudden hope shot through my soul;
Almost was I unmanned.

"But thou wilt go with me?" I cried;
"Fair virgin—let us be
In holy bonds, by solemn rites,
Our own community."

"My life, my fortune, all I have
I tender now to you;
I live in a three-story house,
And I am well-to-do."

"Wilt go with me—you hesitate?
A brown stone front, you know"—
Down came she from the wagon box
And answered me, "I go."
—*Providence Press.*

### OLD TIMES ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

#### A "Cub" Pilot's Experience; or, Learning the River.

BY MARK TWAIN.

II.

What with lying on the rocks four days at Louisville, and some other delays, the poor old Paul Jones fooled away about two weeks in making the voyage from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This gave me a chance to get acquainted with one of the pilots, and he taught me how to steer the boat, and thus made the fascination of river life more potent than ever for me.

It also gave me a chance to get acquainted with a youth who had taken deck passage—more's the pity, for he easily borrowed $6 of me on a promise to return to the boat and pay it back to me the day after we should arrive. But he probably died or forgot, for he never came. It was doubtless the former, since he had said his parents were wealthy, and he only traveled deck passage because it was cooler.

I soon discovered two things. One was that a vessel would not be likely to sail for the mouth of the Amazon under ten or twelve years; and the other was that the nine or ten dollars still left in my pocket would not suffice for so imposing an exploration as I had planned, even if I could afford to wait for a ship. Therefore it followed that I must contrive a new career. The Paul Jones was now bound for St. Louis. I planned a siege against my pilot, and at the end of three hard days he surrendered. He agreed to teach me the Mississippi river from New Orleans to St. Louis for $500, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of "learning" twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi river with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide.

The boat backed out from New Orleans at four in the afternoon, and it was "our watch" until eight. Mr. B——, my chief, "straightened her up," plowed her along past the sterns of the other boats that lay at the levee, and then said, "Here, take her; shave those steamships as close as you'd peel an apple." I took the wheel, and my heart went down into my boots; for it seemed to me that we were about to scrape the side off every ship in the line, we were so close. I held my breath and began to claw the boat away from the danger; and I had my own opinion of the pilot who had known no better than to get us into such peril, but I was too wise to express it. In half a minute I had a wide margin of safety intervening between the Paul Jones and the ships; and within ten seconds more I was set aside in disgrace, and Mr. B—— was going into danger again and flaying me alive with abuse of my cowardice. I was stung, but I was obliged to admire the easy confidence with which my chief loafed from side to side of his wheel, and trimmed the ships so closely that disaster seemed ceaselessly imminent. When he had cooled a little he told me that the easy water was close ashore and the current outside, and therefore we must hug the bank, up stream, to get the benefit of the former, and stay well out, down stream, to take advantage of the latter. In my own mind I resolved to be a down stream pilot and leave the up streaming to people dead to prudence.

Now and then Mr. B—— called my attention to certain things. Said he: "This is Six-mile point." I assented. It was pleasant enough information, but I could not see the bearing of it. I was not conscious that it was a matter of any interest to me. Another time he said: "This is Nine-mile point." Later he said: "This is Twelve-mile point." They were all about level with the water's edge; they all looked about alike to me; they were monotonously unpicturesque. I hoped Mr. B—— would change the subject. But no; he would crowd up around a point, hugging the shore with affection, and then say: "The slack water ends here, abreast this bunch of China trees; now we cross over." So he crossed over. He gave me the wheel once or twice, but I had no luck. I either came near chipping off the edge of a sugar plantation or else I yawed too far from shore, and so I dropped back into disgrace again and got abused.

The watch was ended at last, and we took supper and went to bed. At midnight the glare of a lantern shone in my eyes, and the night watchman said:

"Come! turn out!"

And then he left. I could not understand this extraordinary procedure; so I presently gave up trying to, and dozed off to sleep. Pretty soon the watchman was back again, and this time he was gruff. I was annoyed. I said:

"What do you want to come bothering around here in the middle of the night for? Now, as like as not I'll not get to sleep again to-night."

The watchman said:

"Well, if this ain't good, [illegible]"

The "off watch" was just turning in, and I heard some brutal laughter from them, and such remarks as "Hello, watchman! an't the new cub turned out yet? He's delicate, likely. Give him some sugar in a rag, and send for the chambermaid to sing rock-a-by baby to him."

About this time Mr. B—— appeared on the scene. Something like a minute later I was climbing the pilot house steps with some of my clothes on and the rest in my arms. Mr. B—— was close behind, commenting. Here was something fresh—this thing of getting up in the middle of the night to go to work. It was a detail in piloting that had never occurred to me at all. I knew that boats ran all night, but somehow I had never happened to reflect that somebody had to get up out of a warm bed to run them. I began to fear that piloting was not so romantic as I had imagined it was; there was something very real and work-like about this new phase.

It was a rather dingy night, although a fair number of stars were out. The big mate was at the wheel, and he had the old tub pointed at a star and was holding her straight up the middle of the river. The shores on either hand were not much more than a mile apart, but they seemed wonderfully far away and ever so vague and distinct. The mate said:

"We've got to land at Jones' plantation, sir."

The vengeful spirit in me exulted. I said to myself, I wish you joy of your job, Mr. B——; you'll have a good time finding Mr. Jones' plantation such a night as this; and I hope you never will find it as long as you live.

Mr. B—— said to the mate:

"Upper end of the plantation, or the lower?"

"Upper."

"I can't do it. The stumps there are out of water at this stage. It's no great distance to the lower, and you'll have to get along with that."

"All right, sir. If Jones don't like it he'll have to jump it, I reckon."

And then the mate left. My exultation began to cool and my wonder to come up. Here was a man who not only proposed to find his plantation on such a night, but to find either end of it you preferred. I dreadfully wanted to ask a question, but I was carrying about as many short answers as my cargo-room would admit of, so I held my peace. All I desired to ask Mr. B—— was the simple question whether he was ass enough to really imagine he was going to find that plantation on a night when all plantations were exactly alike, and all the same color. But I held in. I used to have the inspirations of prudence in those days.

Mr. B—— made for the shore and soon was scraping it, just the same as if it had been daylight. And not only that, but singing—

"Father in heaven, the day is declining," etc.

It seemed to me that I had put my life in the keeping of a peculiarly reckless outcast. Presently he turned on me and said:

"What's the name of the first point above New Orleans?"

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

"Don't know?"

This manner jolted me. I was down at the foot again in a moment. But I had to say just what I had said before.

"Well, you're a smart one," said Mr. B——. "What's the name of the next point?"

Once more I didn't know.

"Well this beats anything. Tell me the name of any point or place I told you."

I studied awhile and decided that I couldn't.

"Look-a-here! What do you start out from above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?"

"I—I—don't know."

"You—you—don't know?" mimicking my drawling manner of speech. "What do you know?"

"I—I—nothing, for certain."

"By the great Cæsar's ghost I believe you! You're the stupidest dunderhead I ever saw or ever heard of, so help me, Moses! The idea of you being a pilot—you! Why, you don't know enough to pilot a cow down a lane."

Oh, but his wrath was up! He was a nervous man, and he shuffled from one side of his wheel to the other as if the floor was hot. He would boil a while to himself, and then overflow and scald me again.

"Look-a-here! What do you suppose I told you the name of those points for?"

I tremblingly considered a moment, and then the devil of temptation provoked me to say:

"Well—to—be entertaining, I thought."

This was a red rag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judge it made him blind, because he ran over the steering oar of a trading scow. Of course the traders sent up a volley of red hot profanity. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. B—— was, because he was brim full, and here were subjects who would *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust his head out, and such an irruption followed as I never heard before. The fainter and further away the scowmen's curses drifted, the higher Mr. B—— lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a seine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me in the gentlest way:

"My boy, you must get a little memorandum book and every time I tell you a thing put it down right away. There's only one way to be a pilot, and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A B C."

That was a dismal revelation to me, for my memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges. However, I did not feel discouraged long. I judged that it was best to make some allowances, for doubtless Mr. B—— was "stretching." Presently he pulled a rope and struck a few strokes on the big bell. The stars were all gone now and the night was as black as ink. I could hear the wheels churn along the bank, but I was not entirely certain that I could see the shore. The voice of the invisible watchman called up from the hurricane deck:

"What's this, sir?"

"Jones' plantation."

I said to myself, I wish I might venture to offer a small bet that it isn't. But I did not chirp. I only waited to see. Mr. B—— handled the engine bells, and in due time the boat's nose came to the land, a torch glowed from the forecastle, a man skipped ashore, a darky's voice on the bank said, "Gimme de carpet-bag, Mars' Jones," and the next moment we were standing up the river again, all serene. I reflected deeply a while, and then said, but not loud, well, the finding of that plantation was the luckiest accident that ever happened, but it couldn't happen again in a hundred years. And I fully believe it was an accident, too.

By the time we had gone seven or eight hundred miles up the river, I had learned to be a tolerably plucky up stream steersman, in daylight, and before we reached St. Louis I had made a trifle of progress in night work, but only a trifle. I had a notebook that fairly bristled with the names of towns, "points," bars, islands, bends, reaches, etc., but the information was to be found only in the notebook—none of it was in my head. It made my heart ache to think I had only got half of the river set down; for as our watch was four hours off and four hours on, day and night, there was a long four-hour gap in my book for every time I had slept since the voyage began.

My chief was presently hired to go on a big New Orleans boat, and I packed my satchel and went with him. She was a grand affair. When I stood in her pilot house I was so far above the water that I seemed perched on a mountain; and her decks stretched so far away, fore and aft, below me, that I wondered how I could have considered the little Paul Jones a large craft. There were other differences, too. The Paul Jones' pilot house was a cheap, dingy, battered rattle-trap, cramped for room; but here was a sumptuous glass temple; room enough to have a dance in; showing red and gold window curtains; an imposing sofa; leather cushions, and a back to the high bench where visiting pilots sit, to spin yarns and "look at the river;" bright, fanciful "cuspadores" instead of a broad wooden box filled with saw dust; nice new oil cloth on the floor; a hospitable big stove for winter; a wheel as high as my head, costly with inlaid work; a wire tiller rope; bright brass knobs for the bells, and a tidy, white aproned, black "texas tender," to bring up tarts and ices and coffee during mid-watch, day [illegible] Now, this was "[illegible]"; and so I began to take heart once more to believe that piloting was a romantic sort of occupation after all. The moment we were under way I began to prowl about the great steamer and fill myself with joy. She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel; she had an oil picture, by some gifted sign painter, on every stateroom door; she glittered with no end of prism-fringed chandeliers; the clerk's office was elegant, the bar was marvelous, and the barkeeper had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost. The boiler deck (*i. e.*, the second story of the boat, so to speak) was as spacious as a church, it seemed to me; so with the forecastle, and there was no pitiful handful of deck hands, firemen and roustabouts down there, but a whole battalion of men. The fires were fiercely glaring from a long row of furnaces, and over them were eight huge boilers! This was unutterable pomp. The mighty engines—but enough of this. I had never felt so fine before. And when I found that the regiment of natty servants respectfully "Sir'd" me, my satisfaction was complete.

When I returned to the pilot house St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it; you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it, when coming up stream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river both ways.

The pilot house was full of pilots, going down to "look at the river." What is called the "upper river," (the two hundred miles between St. Louis and Cairo, where the Ohio comes in), was low; and the Mississippi changes its channel so constantly that the pilots used to always find it necessary to run down to Cairo to take a fresh look, when their boats were to lie in port a week, that is, when the water was at a low stage. A deal of this "looking at the river" was done by poor fellows who seldom had a berth, and whose only hope of getting one lay in their always being freshly posted, and therefore ready to drop into the shoes of some reputable pilot, for a single trip, on account of such pilot's sudden illness, or some other necessity. And a good many of them constantly ran up and down inspecting the river, not because they ever really hoped to get a berth, but because (they being guests of the boat) it was cheaper to "look at the river" than stay ashore and pay board. In time these fellows grew dainty in their tastes, and only infested boats that had an established reputation for setting good tables. All visiting pilots were useful, for they were always ready and willing, winter or summer, night or day, to go out in the yawl and help buoy the channel or assist the boat's pilots in any way they could. They were likewise welcome because all pilots are tireless talkers when gathered together, and as they talk only about the river they are always understood and are always interesting. Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings.

We had a fine company of these river inspectors along this trip. There were eight or ten, and there was abundance of room for them in our great pilot house. Two or three of them wore polished silk hats, elaborate shirt fronts, diamond breastpins, kid gloves and patent leather boots. They were choice in their English and bore themselves with a dignity proper to men of solid means and prodigious reputation as pilots. The others were more or less loosely clad, and wore upon their heads tall felt cones that were suggestive of the days of the Commonwealth.

I was a cipher in this august company and felt subdued, not to say torpid. I was not even of sufficient consequence to assist at the wheel when it was necessary to put the tiller hard down in a hurry; the guest that stood nearest did that when occasion required—and this was pretty much all the time, because of the crookedness of the channel and scant water. I stood in a corner, and the talk I listened to took the hope all out of me. One visitor said to another:

"Jim, how did you run Plum Point, coming up?"

"It was in the night, there, and I ran it the way one of the boys on the Diana told me; started out about fifty yards above the wood pile on the false point, and held on the cabin under Plum Point till I raised the reef—quarter less twain—then straightened up for the middle oar till I got well abreast the old one limbed cottonwood in the bend, then got my stern on the cotton wood and head on the low place above the point, and came through a-booming—nine and a half."

"Pretty square crossing, ain't it?"

"Yes, but the upper bar's working down fast."

Another pilot spoke up and said:

"I had better water than that, and ran it lower down; started out from the false point—mark twain—raised the second reef abreast the big snag in the bend, and had quarter less twain."

One of the gorgeous ones remarked: "I want to find fault with your leadsmen, but that's a good deal of water for Plum Point, it seems to me."

There was an approving nod all around at this quiet snub dropped on the boaster and "settled" him. And so they went on talk-talk-talking. Meantime, the thing that was running in my mind was, "Now if my ears hear aright, I have not only to get the names of all the towns and islands and bends, and so on, by heart, but I must even get up a warm personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cottonwood and obscure wood pile that ornaments the banks of this river for 1200 miles; and more than that, I must actually know where these things are in the dark, unless these guests are gifted with eyes that can pierce through two miles of solid blackness; I wish the piloting business was in Jericho and I had never thought of it."

At dusk Mr. B—— tapped the big bell three times (the signal to land), and the captain emerged from his drawingroom in the forward end of the texas, and looked up inquiringly. Mr. —— said:

"We will lay up here all night, captain."

"Very well, sir."

That was all. The boat came to shore and was tied up for the night. It seemed to me a fine thing that the pilot could do as he pleased without asking so grand a captain's permission. I took my supper and went immediately to bed, discouraged by my day's observations and experiences. My late voyage note-booking was but a confusion of meaningless names. It had tangled me all up in a knot every time I had looked at it in the daytime. I now hoped for respite in sleep; but no, it reveled all through my head until sunrise again, a frantic and tireless nightmare.

Next morning I felt pretty rusty and low spirited. We went booming along, taking a good many chances, for we were anxious to "get out of the river" (as getting out to Cairo was called) before night should overtake us. But Mr. B——'s partner, the other pilot, presently grounded the boat, and we lost so much time getting her off that it was plain the darkness would overtake us a good way above the mouth. This was a great misfortune, especially to certain of our visiting pilots, whose boats would have to wait for their return, no matter how long that might be. It sobered the pilot house talk a good deal. Coming up stream pilots did not mind low water or any kind of darkness; nothing stopped them but fog. But down stream work was different; a boat was too nearly helpless, with a stiff current pushing behind her; so it was not customary to run down stream at night in low water.

There seemed to be one small hope, however; if we could get through the intricate and dangerous Hat Island crossing before night, we could venture the rest, for we would have plainer sailing and better water. But it would be insanity to attempt Hat Island at night. So there was a deal of looking at watches all the rest of the day, and a constant ciphering upon the speed we were making; Hat Island was the eternal subject; sometimes hope was high and sometimes we were delayed in a bad crossing, and down it went again. For hours all hands lay under the burden of this suppressed excitement; it was even communicated to me, and I got to feeling so solicitous about Hat Island, and under such an awful pressure of responsibility, that I wished I might have five minutes on shore to draw a good, full, relieving breath, and start over again. We were standing on regular watches. Each of our pilots ran such portions of the river as he run when coming up stream, because of his greater familiarity with it; but both remained in the pilot house constantly.

An hour before sunset Mr. B—— took the wheel and Mr. W—— stepped aside. For the next thirty minutes every man held his watch in his hand and was restless, silent and uneasy. At last somebody said, with a doubtful sigh:

"Well, yonder's Hat Island—and we can't make it."

All the watches closed with a snap, everybody sighed and muttered something about its being "too bad, too bad—ah, if we could only have got here half an hour sooner!" and the place was thick with the atmosphere of disappointment. Some started to go out, but loitered, hearing a bell tap to land. The sun dipped behind the horizon, the boat went on. Inquiring looks passed from one guest to another, and one who had his hand on the door knob, and had turned it, waited, then presently took his hand away and let the knob turn back again. We bore steadily down the bend. More looks were exchanged, and nods of surprised admiration—but no words. Insensibly the men drew together behind Mr. B—— as the sun darkened and one or two dim stars came out. The dead silence and sense of waiting became oppressive. Mr. B—— pulled the cord, and two deep, mellow notes from the big bell floated off on the night. Then a pause, and one more note was struck. The watchman's voice followed, from the hurricane roof:

"Labboard lead, there! Stabboard lead!"

The cries of the leadsmen began to rise out of the distance, and were gruffly repeated by the word passers on the hurricane deck.

"M-a-r-k three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter less three! Half twain! Quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain! Quarter less"—

Mr. B—— pulled two bell ropes, and was answered by faint jinglings far below in the engine room, and our speed slackened. The steam began to whistle through the gauge cocks. The cries of the leadsmen went on—and it is a weird sound, always, in the night. Every pilot in the lot was watching now with fixed eyes, and talking under his breath. Nobody was caln and easy but Mr. B——. He would put his wheel down and stand on a spoke, and as the steamer swung into her (to me) utterly invisible marks—for we seemed to be in the midist of a wide and gloomy sea—he would meet and fasten her there. Talk was going on now in low voices:

"There; she's over the first reef all right!"

After a pause, another subdued voice:

"Her stern's coming down just exactly right, by George! Now she's in the marks; over she goes!"

Somebody else muttered:

"Oh, it was done beautiful—beautiful!"

Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. This drifting was the dismalist work; it held one's heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered its deeper shadow, and so imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate, and I had the strongest impulse to do something, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr. B—— stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a cat, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back.

"She'll not make it!" somebody whispered.

The water grew shoaler and shoaler by the leadsmen's cries, till it was down to—

"Eight and a half! E-i-g-h-t feet! E-i-g-h-t feet! Seven and"—

Mr. B—— said warningly through his speaking tube to the engineer:

"Stand by, now!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Seven and a half! Seven feet! Six and"—

We touched bottom! Instantly Mr. B—— set a lot of bells ringing, shouted through the tube, "Now let her have it—every ounce you've got!" then to his partner, "Put her hard down! snatch her! snatch her!" The boat rasped and ground her way through the sand, hung upon the apex of disaster a single tremendous instant, and then over she went! And such a shout as went up at Mr. B——'s back never loosened the roof of a pilot house before!

There was no more trouble after that. Mr. B—— was a hero that night, and it was some little time, too, before his exploit ceased to be talked about by river men.

Fully to realize the marvelous precision required in laying the great steamer in her marks in that murky waste of water, one should know that not only must she pick her intricate way through snags and blind reefs, and then shave the head of the island so closely as to brush the overhanging foliage with her stern, but one place she must pass almost within arm's reach of a sunken and invisible wreck that would snatch the hull timbers from under her if she should strike it, and destroy a quarter of a million dollars' worth of steamboat and cargo in five minutes, and maybe a hundred and fifty human lives into the bargain.

The last remark I heard that night was a compliment to Mr. B——, uttered in soliloquy and with unction by one of our guests. He said:

"By the Shadow of Death, but he is a lightning pilot."—*Atlantic Monthly.*

### They Couldn't Trade.

Keyser had lightning rods placed upon his barn three or four years ago; but during last summer the building was struck by lightning and burned. When he got his new barn done, a man came around with a red wagon and wanted to sell him a set of Bolt & Burnam's patent lightning rods.

"I believe not," said Keyser," I had rods on the barn at the time of the—"

"I know," exclaimed the agent, "I know you had, and very likely that's the reason you were struck. Nothin's more likly to attract lightnin' than worthless rods."

"How do you know they were worthless!"

"Why, I was driven' by yer in the spring, and I seen them rods, and I says to myself, that barn'll be struck some time, but there's no use in tryin' to convince Mr. Keyser; so I didn't call. I knowed it, because they had iron tips. A rod with iron tips is no better'n a clothes prop to ward off lightnin."

"The man who sold them to me said they had platinum tips," remarked Keyser.

"Ah! this is a wicked world, Mr. Keyser. You can't be too cautious. Some of these yer agents lie like a gas meter. It's awful, sir. They are wholly untrustworthy. Them rods was the most ridicklus sham I ever see. A regular gouge. They wa'nt worth the labor it took to put 'em up. They wa'nt now, that's the honest truth."

"What kind do you offer?"

"Well, sir, I've got the only genuine lightnin' rod that's made. It's constructed on scientific principles. Professor Huxley says it's sure to run off the electric fluid every time. Twisted charcoal iron, glass insulators, eight points on each rod, warranted solid platinum. We give a written guarantee with each rod. Never had a house struck since we began to offer this rod to the public. Positive fact. The lightnin'll play all around a house with one of 'em and never touch it. A thunder storm that'd tear the bowels out of the American continent, would leave your house as safe as a polar bear in the middle of an iceberg. Shall I run you one up?"

"I don't know," said Keyser, musingly.

"I'll put you up one cheap, and then you'll have somethin' reliable—somethin' there's no discount on."

"You say the old rod was a fraud?"

"The deadliest fraud you ever heard of. It hadn't an ounce of platinum within a mile of it. The man that sold it ought to be prosecuted, and the fellow that put it up without insulators should be shot. It's too bad the farmers should be gouged in this sort of way."

"And Bolt & Burnam's rod is not a fraud?"

"A fraud? Why, really, my dear sir, just cast your eye over Professor Huxley's letter and these certificates, and remember that we give a written guarantee—a positive protection, of course."

"Just cast your eye over that," said Keyser, handing him a piece of paper.

"Well, upon my word! This is indeed somewhat, that is to say, as it were—it looks—it looks a little like one of our own certificates."

"Just so," said Keyser. "That old rod was one of Bolt & Burnam's. You sold it to my son-in-law; you gave this certificate; you swore the points were platinum, and your man put it up."

"Then I suppose we can't trade!"

"Well, I should think not," said Keyser.

Whereupon the man mounted the red wagon and moved on.—*Max Adeler.*

### Youthful Diplomacy.

A little six-year-old gird in Monroe went into a store where her father was the other day, and slyly approaching him, said: "Papa, won't you buy me a new dress?" "What, buy you a new dress, Susy?" "Yes, papa, won't you?" "Well, I'll see; I'll speak to your mother about it." Elongation to an alarming extent rapidly spread over that little countenance, but a thought suddenly struck her, and with a smile, she looked up into her father's face and said: "Well, papa, if you do speak to mamma about it, do it easy, or she may want the new dress herself!" The father at once saw the point, and the new dress was purchased.—*Littleton (Massachusetts) Republic.*

[For the Republican.]

### HOPE'S MAGIC CUP.

BY JULIA P. CRESWELL.

Hope gave to man a magic cup,
In years grown gray and dim;
And placed a rainbow in each drop
That bubbles on its brim.

Then pledge me in that cup, when morn
Breaks o'er thy budding life
And with its liquid beauty drain
The worship of thy wife.

Pledge me again at burning noon
That cup of crystal grace,
And in its pearly depths behold
Thy daughter's artless face.

Once more at evening's purple hour,
When busy toil is done,
That magic cup will then reveal
The future of thy son.

And then, when night crowns day with stars,
And social joy descends,
That cup will prove, pure as thine own,
The friendship of thy friends.

All through life's varied winding paths,
From youth to manhood up,
Wife, children, friends and fortune, too,
Dwell in Hope's magic cup.

Greenwood, Caddo parish, Louisiana.

### Alexis and His Banished Wife.

A Berlin correspondent of the Cincinnati *Gazette* writes the following:

In the pleasant suburbs of a city not a day's ride from Berlin there stood this summer a new and handsome unoccupied villa, whose outward proportions and pleasant yard were a constant source of admiration to a cosy little party of summer guests that assembled for coffee on the piazza of the adjoining house.

Our little circle was thrown into a flutter of excitement one morning by the announcement that the villa had been rented for a few months to a wealthy Russian family. The arrangements afforded us an endless theme of conversation and conjectures, and the coffee hour was often prolonged as late as it was possible for us to use our crochet needles, in the hope of seeing the arrival of the family, or the mistress, who we all agreed must be young and beautiful to harmonize with the charming decorations of her home.

One bright afternoon our anxious waiting was relieved by the sound of wheels and the quick steps of spirited horses, and soon a magnificent carriage rolled up to the gateway. The footman sprang from his seat, opened the door and assisted an elderly gentleman of prepossessing appearance to descend the steps; then came a pretty child of two or three years; then the mother, a beautiful young woman, her grace and carriage, indicating noble birth. She was dressed in an elegant and becoming costume of the latest mode. Her broad brim felt hat, turned up at the side and edged with gray ostrich feathers, while a long plume of the same color drooped gracefully from the crown, set off her handsome face to the best advantage. She gathered up her velvet mantle and walked proudly into the house, without deigning a glance at the curious eyes who overlooked her from the neighboring piazza above, but bowed graciously to the servants who assembled to receive her.

Passing weeks did not serve to allay our curiosity, for no one could tell who the pretty Russian was, and after a few days the elderly gentleman disappeared. She seemed to have no friends or acquaintances. No one evercame to the house, and when she drove out it was always with her child and a lady, evidently her companion. The prolonged quiet became wearisome to most of the guests in the adjoining house, and the eager curiosity had settled down to an occasional conjecture as we awaited the postman, and were often disappointed in our pleasant expectations, while he invariably passed on to the handsome villa. Individually, my interest increased rather than abated, for as I often sat alone enjoying the gathering twilight in my room, which faced the chamber of the pretty, solitary woman, the gas was lighted, and, without drawing the curtains, the child was arrayed by the nurse in his nightly garments under the careful supervision of the mother. This seemed to be the one hour for which the mother lived, and I saw her tender caresses; and the frolicsome gambols of the beautiful boy, with a growing interest that I did not care to impart to others, for I was jealous of the friendly carelessness with which they regarded me. Knowing that I still sat by my window, and could see directly into the room, they did not care to shut me out by loosening the falling drapery of the window. So my kindly interest kept pace with my imagination that wove for them many aromantic tale.

A rumor reached us that the pretty woman was the banished wife of a certain member of a royal family, but nothing occurred to confirm the report. The magnificent open carriage had been put away and replaced by an elegant, close two-seated cab, in which the lady and child took their usual airing. The short days and cool evenings admonished the summer guests it was time to disperse to their winter quarters, and I confess that it was with a feeling of real regret that I looked for the last time on the bright boy and his interesting mother, for my interest had grown to be more than mere idle curiosity.

A friend who remained promised to announce to us anything unusual that might happen to our interesting neighbor. Soon we heard, "Since a certain royal family are reported to be in Paris our pretty neighbor has received a dispatch regularly every morning." The messenger, who chanced to bring a dispatch to our landlady, complained that he had made that long walk every morning for some days in order to carry a dispatch to the adjoining villa. This seemed to confirm the floating rumor, and the lady grew to be more an object of interest than ever.

Not long after an unusual excitement at the villa attracted attention, and the anxious appearance of the pretty woman at the window announced an expectant arrival. Presently a tall, handsome man in plain black dress walked quietly up from the depot. The butler and footman were waiting at the door fairly laughing from the crown of their powdered heads to the soles of their slippered feet. At the first sound of the opening gate, the pretty woman, regardless of all ceremony and everything but giving away to her long pent-up feelings, flew down the stairway, and in an instant more was clasped in the loving arms of her husband, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia.

He remained with her Friday, Saturday and Sunday, only going out with her and the child for a drive in the close cab. Sunday evening she took him alone in the cab to the depot, and Tuesday morning our papers announced that Sunday, 12:30 P. M., the Grand Duke Alexis arrived in Berlin, from Paris, and took lodgings with the Russian Embassador. We knowing ones smiled over the petty deception, but out of regard for the devoted wife said nothing, and now that all danger is over, I entrust the secret to the generosity of your readers, who I know will sympathize with the situation of the pretty countess, who dares not to be the acknowledged wife of a possible claimant of the Russian throne.

### Illegal Flirtations.

No woman can carry on flirtation with a married man that is not criminal. No woman can flirt innocently even with a young man. It is the first step toward unbalancing his character. Through her he sees other women and forms an estimate. The young girl who enters a family and wins the affections of the husband and father knowingly—and she can not do it otherwise—has entered on the road to perdition. There is a punishment for the housebreaker, but none for the home-breaker, who steals and mars life's best treasures. Every woman has the first best right to her husband. He is hers in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as exclusively as she should be his. He is to provide for her, honor her and love her. He is her protector against all the adverse circumstances of life. No other woman has any right to the same attentions and endearments, and a wife has a perfect right to resent such intrusion. A man who saw another man's arm around his wife's waist would consider it a case for court, or an exercise for pistol shooting. Women, with keener sensibilities and finer natures, feel it deeper. It touches the heart.

A certain sensible friend of mine says there are two things she will never allow anybody to meddle with—her husband and her sewing machine. Such flirtations are unworthy of true manhood or womanhood. They blight the lives that were created in the original of God, and make the innocent suffer for the guilty. All mothers will do well to see that their daughters are not mentally grown on the morbid books in which somebody is always represented as falling in love with somebody else's husband or wife, and a "soul union" pictured, which is only intended to veil the incarnation of lust. There are enough men and women to fall by the force of circumstances, or the depravity of original sin, without educating any to it. It is well enough to pull our ox or ass out of the pit, but we do not want to dig pits for them to fall into.

Many a soul has gone blood-stained, into the presence of its Maker, sent thither by a climax of dark circumstances brought about by a woman's flirtation. Don't flirt! It is unwomanly; it is untrue to your sex; it is a wrong against that mother whose memory you revere. The man you are tempting will not respect you, and worse, you will not respect yourself.

### DYING OUT.

BY ORPHEUS C. KERR.

[Written in 1868.]

'Twas by the wayside, near a Southern town,
I spied a sage beneath a tree reclining;
His old straw hat was guiltless of a crown,
His pantaloons had less of cloth than lining.
Addressing him about the latest news,
I quickly found him by his language hazy;
A man of logic destined to confuse,
And style of reasoning to make you crazy.

"I reckon you're a Yankee, come," said he,
"Upon some sneaking mission or another,
To see how being equalized and free,
Agree with him you call your colored brother.
Extinction waits on him with all his rights.
So freely given by your laws confounded!
He'll keep attacking the defenseless whites,
'Till all the colored race are killed or wounded.

"In New Orleans—behold the lesson taught,—
When in convention certain blacks assembled.
A sound of peaceful throngs outside was caught,
And in the hall the blacks bloodthirsty trembled.
Then through the windows, lobbies, outer gate,
By the unarmed Caucasian race surrounded,
The freedmen sallied in their murderous hate,
And nineteen colored men were badly wounded.

"In Central Georgia, several months ago,
The sons of Africa held a loyal meeting,
And divers white men went to see the show,
And give the speakers friendly Southern greeting.
But lo! when speaking had gone on a spell,
And all the air with loyal words resounded,
Upon the helpless whites the negroes fell,
And thirteen colored men were badly wounded.

"In old Virginia, at a rural place,
Where many Africans had come for voting,
The merest handful of the higher race
Were looking on, and minor matters noting;
When, at a cry about some vote refused,
The blacks infuriate on the handful bounded,
Their knives and pistols mercilessly used,
And fourteen colored men were badly wounded.

"So at the capital of all the States—
Your boasted Washington, the placid city—
There was, in journals of the proper dates,
Correct report of what should move your pity;
The town election rallied countless blacks,
Who, armed and maddened, and to riot hounded,
Made on the unresisting whites attacks,
And fifteen colored men were badly wounded.

"Yet furthermore, of late in Tennessee,
Where Stokes was beaten at the polls by Senter,
The savage negroes, armed from head to knee,
Seemed on a fight than on their woes intenter;
To vent some petty, diabolic spite,
Upon the plea of some vague charge unfounded,
They turned in fury on a single white,
And sixteen colored men were badly wounded.

"The race of colored men is dying out!"
The sage concluded, with a dismal gesture;
And left me victim of amazing doubt,
While he went onward in his ragged vesture.
If Southern whites unarmed so deadly are
To Southern colored men full armed and banded,
How much more fatal would they be by far
If by the reconstruction laws unbanded!

### The Situation in Louisiana.

The following letter from the gallant lieutenant colonel of the Third United States Infantry, appears in the Philadelphia *Bulletin* of January 26. It was not written for publication, but for the private information of a gentleman of that city, who furnished it to the press:

NEW ORLEANS, January 19, 1875.

DEAR SIR—Yours of the tenth instant reached me a few days since. As to political matters here, it would require more writing than I am capable of to give you a correct idea of affairs. To make a long story short, Sheridan is right; he does not mean that all are to be considered as fit objects or subjects for summary punishment, but that the leaders or promoters of discord and strife, and the organizers of the many murders and massacres, are, under the enforcement act, "banditti," and once so styled could be tried by a military commission. The hue and cry raised is a partisan one, and is intended to serve party ends.

As to the Legislature here, I can scarcely do the subject justice. The Democrats were in the minority, and by revolutionary measures attempted to seize the organization. To do this they seated, without the shadow of law, right, or anything usually so considered, enough of those who claimed seats to give them a majority. It was then that the majority of the regular members went to the Governor and asked his aid in expelling from the floor those who had no right to participate in the organization. This was done by the only force in the State which can keep the peace—the army. The Democrats at once left the House, and have not yet returned to claim their seats. The other side has not yet attempted to pass any laws, nor do I think they can. I think the whole thing is rather much mixed. The secret is that Warmoth, the former Governor, is now trying to get control of political affairs in the interest of the opponents of Grant, and Grant's friends are trying to defeat him. The Democrats are, in the meantime, trying to get control, so among all parties there is a very lively time. As to the safety of a man of Republican sentiments, there is none in many parts of the State, nor can there be so long as the Southern-born men are as bitter rebels at heart as they were in 1861.

This is the reason of all the murders and massacres which have occurred here since 1866. About 4000 men have been killed for their political opinions' sake, of which we have very good data. Many more, no doubt, of which we can get no data.

It will all come out and be published soon, so that you may see for yourself how near Sheridan was right. Merchants from the North, doing business here, tell me that there is no safety for a man who does not agree with the whites in politics. The country is divided into whites and blacks—Democrats and Republicans. A few whites are to be found who are brave enough to be Republicans. Truly,

JOHN R. BROOKE.

### Louisiana—The Exigency of the Hour.

The President, in a message to the Senate accomanied with official correspondence, reports and telegrams, has given to Congress and the public a full, clear and reliable report of the condition of affairs in Louisiana. In all his past connection, up to the present date, with the serious and difficult problem of reconstruction, it will be admitted by every impartial critic that he has faithfully discharged his duty in the premises. He has now reached the limit of his authority, and appeals to Congress to adopt measures for the complete restoration of order and harmony, and guarantees to that body a faithful execution of such laws as in their judgment may be deemed necessary to be enacted for that purpose.

In five weeks more the Forty third Congress will be brought to a close. Already the condition of the South, and especially that of Louisiana, has been fully discussed. Will the Republican members allow the remaining time to be frittered away in useless debate without decisive action? This is the aim of the opposition, and will continue to be their effort until the fourth of March; if there is not statesmanship and force enough in Congress among the friends of the law and order to decide at once upon a policy, and by proper and prompt legislation empower the executive to carry out their instructions.

The present is a critical period in national affairs. All unnecessary excitement by inflammatory speeches and newspaper comments should be avoided. Moderation and firmness among the true friends of the Union, in Congress and throughout the length and breadth of the land, should be exercised. In nine cases out of ten the acts of the President are denounced by the opposition on purely political grounds, without the slightest regard to the facts in the case. But he has never yet swerved from the line of duty, and will not now, by the denunciations of Democratic State Governors, resolutions by Democratic State Legislatures, or the entire chorus of the opposition in Congress. There is statesmanship and nerve enough in Congress to meet the emergency successfully and promptly, as the finance question was finally met and disposed of, and we need not doubt that the effort will be fully sustained by every good Republican and true Democrat throughout the country.

The first duty of the government, under all circumstances, is the protection of life and property. Under the present state of feeling in the South, encouraged by the Democratic and so-called "independent" press in the North, this can be done, for the present, only by the presence of an army, and if the forces already stationed in the rebellious States is inadequate to the emergency, let it be increased even if the general army should require to be augmented for that purpose. Without safety to life and security to property there can be no hope for peace or prosperity.

The next duty in the present case will be to restore and guard the ballot box in its purity, and to protect each qualified voter, without regard to color, in the full exercise of his elective franchise. Wherever the State Legislatures have failed in this duty, the obligation falls upon Congress to interfere in behalf of the oppressed and ostracised, and to authorize the presence of the military power wherever it becomes necessary.

The third duty of the government should, we think, be provision for an effective system of popular education, in which all classes will be reached by free schools in which they can receive a good English education. The appropriation of the receipts from the sale of public lands for this purpose is very generally advocated by the friends of popular education; and, under judicious legislation, the fund—some $3,000,000 per annum—or a certain portion of it, with the balance placed on interest as a reserve fund, would go directly to build schoolhouses and provide teachers in the different States. The distribution would be made on the ratio of illiteracy, and this would bring the main portion of the fund to the South, and into those States there in which it is most needed. The schools will be free to all, and those who fail to use them will themselves be the sufferers. The absentees would not be numerous, and would grow less each year until the attendance would become general.

The next duty to the South would be liberal appropriations for public improvements by deepening the mouth of the Mississippi and securing its levees against periodical inundations, by assisting pecuniarily in securing increased facilities by canal and railway for the quick and cheap transportation of the cotton crop and other agricultural products; and, by offering increased inducements to immigration, and to the employment of capital in erecting cotton and other factories in each of those States. The question of liberal appropriations for public improvements is now under consideration, to follow the restoration of peace and harmony.

These measures, judiciously inaugurated and carried out, would bring to the people of that section of the Union—

1. Security to life and property.
2. Respect for personal rights.
3. Freedom of opinion.
4. Popular education.
5. Universal industry.
6. General prosperity.

This will not all be accomplished in a day, but it is practicable, and its commencement and progress to a successful issue can not be delayed without hazard to life and property in those States, and serious injury to the best interests of the entire country. Will the people of this distracted portion of the Union yield to the claims of humanity and their own material interests, forget the past, and unite with the federal and State governments in persistent efforts to promote the general good? Then there will be no longer any use for the military power in the South; peace and prosperity will then be the common lot of all, and ere long those States will become the most attractive, densely populated, and wealthiest portion of the Union.—*Washington Republic.*

### The Mississippi and its Lower Country.

The President has submitted to Congress a report of the board of engineers appointed to recommend a plan for the reclamation of that portion of the alluvial basin of the Mississippi which is subject to overflow. This board consists of Generals G. K. Warren and H. L. Abbott, of the United States engineer corps; Major W. H. Bengaud, of the same corps; ex-Governor Hebert, of Louisiana, and Colonel Jackson E. Sickles, of Arkansas. These are all able men, and have undoubtedly performed the work assigned them well. They recommend a thorough hydrographical and topographical survey of the section indicated, which will cost about $300,000—$160,000 of which should be forthcoming at once, in order to commence operations without delay. They also urge the immediate appropriation of $3,000,000 to repair existing breaks in the levees of Louisiana, $500,000 for the same purpose in Arkansas, and $500,000 for Mississippi. It is stated that unless these appropriations are promptly made and properly used, the disastrous overflow of previous years are liable to be repeated the first high water.

Judging from the previous action—or, rather, inaction—of Congress in this matter, these recommendations will only meet with partial approval, if any. The national legislature has heretofore treated the subject with that peculiar species of contempt which proceeds from a neat combination of profound ignorance and profound indifference. A million can be readily procured for the benefit of some small port on the New England coast, where possibly fifty fishing smacks may enter in the course of a year; and an equal amount can be had for some insignificant harbor on the upper lakes, touched occasionally by a passing steamer or weather bound lumber vessel. But when money is asked to improve the navigation of the mighty stream which sweeps from the far North to the far South, bearing upon its broad bosom the commerce of the great valley, or to save from destruction the most fertile portion of the continent—then the assembled wisdom of the land is content to dribble out a few hundred thousand under protest! One would think that the Mississippi was nothing more than a country creek, navigated only by crawfish and canoes, and the lands along its southern banks fit only to grow paw-paws and persimmons.

Congress should long ago have approached this important question in the right spirit and with at least a decent amount of knowledge of the vast interests involved. The Mississippi and its tributaries do not belong to any particular section or any particular class; they are the common property of the whole nation, and should be regarded and treated as such. They should be kept in suitable condition for traffic, regardless of expense; for upon them depends, to a very great extent, the prosperity of the communities in their immediate vicinity, and to a scarcely less extent the prosperity of the country at large. These are facts which need no proof, and yet how completely have they been ignored! Even stronger arguments can be adduced in favor of protecting the alluvial lands of the southern Mississippi. These lands constitute—in proportion to their extent—the richest part of the national domain. They produce certain indispensable articles which can be raised nowhere else with the same ease and in the same abundance, and the money derived from the sale of these articles is a powerful reinforcement of the national wealth. Yet a territory which is worth almost as much to us as the borders of the Nile are to Egypt is literally allowed to run to waste for lack of suitable embankments to resist the encroachments of the river. Hardly a twelvemonth passes without an inundation somewhere in Louisiana, Arkansas or Mississippi, which renders temporarily valueless scores of plantations and directly and indirectly destroys millions of dollars in the shape of property. It is quite within the limits of truth to assert that, if the damage done by overflows in the lower Mississippi region during the last twenty-five years could be reduced to cash, the sum would be sufficient to build stone bulwarks from Memphis to New Orleans. And we insist that, if there is no other way of doing it, the nation can afford to line the bank of the Mississippi with solid granite for a thousand miles rather than permit them to lapse into an uncultivated swamp—as they soon must do unless permanently redeemed from the floods.

The report above mentioned is a move in the right direction, and its recommendations—if promptly and wisely carried into effect—will do incalculable good. We earnestly hope that the Western and Southern Senators and Representatives will unite in urging the matter upon the attention of Congress and push it through to a successful termination. Delays are proverbially dangerous, but delay in this case is a crime against the public welfare for which nothing can atone.—*St. Louis Republican.*