

New Orleans Republican OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICIAL OF NEW ORLEANS.

(For the New Orleans Republic.) THE FALLEN EMPIRES. BY A. S. COLLIER.

On Bayou Teche, where deathless eels display Their scaly forms in somber men beneath...

UNDER THE SEA AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

They were scrambling down the rocks, a gay, chattering procession—pretty Kate with her captain; Helen, Isabel, Tom and their midshipman cousin; last of all, Esther—alone.

The path grew steeper. Carefully they followed its windings, step by step, sur-footed Kate accepting the help she didn't need, for that pleasure in being guided and watched.

With cries of delight the party made their way down and scattered through the cave. There was room for an army. It was hard to realize that with the returning tide the space must fill, the gateway close, and leave no resting-place for human foot.

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"Well, what is it? Tell us, please." "Oh! how fat is that A male, did you say? It's not far. Papa, the boy says there's a place called the 'Heads' only a mile away, and we want to go and see it. Can't we go? Tow know the way, don't you, little boy?"

"Well—I don't know. The tide is going out, the boys say; there won't be any trouble of that kind. Are you sure you won't be chilled, or lonely?" "Oh! quite sure."

"And, O Esther, you must have some lunch. You'll be starved before we come back," cried careful Helen. So she and Tom and a basket made their way upward, and a deposit of sandwiches and port wine was left in a convenient crevice.

"Fetch it round, then, as quickly as possible," said Gray. "I shall walk out there opposite the entrance and make a dive for it. If I come up inside, it's all right, and I'll see that no harm happens to Esther till the water falls, and we can get her out."

Left alone, she found with some surprise that she didn't want to cry. All the morning she had felt that to creep away somewhere and weep, and weep her heart out, would be so good; but tears are contrary things. She sat there, dullest into a calm that was almost content.

A little later, she put her sketch away, and crept under a broad ledge, where, through the arch, the exquisite sky-line was visible. The turf tumbled, and she, fascinated like distant bells. She lay as if charmed, her eyes fixed upon the shining horizon.

"And I shall see them no more, no more. Till she gives up its dead." "Then, when she thought she should be able to die, life did not seem to her so long, and it would be blessed to be with Paul, even at the bottom of the ocean." And thinking thus, the long eyelashes drooped more and more heavily, peace fell upon the brow and lips; she was asleep, dreaming a dream of a sweet, joyful day.

How long she slept she never knew. She awoke with a sensation of intense cold. The spell of slumber was so strong upon her that for a moment she did not realize what had taken place. The cave was half full of water. Her feet and the hem of her dress were already wet, and the roar of the waves beneath the heavily-distinguishable archway told that the tide had surprised another victim, and already the avenue of escape was barred.

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DOWN HILL.

A story they tell of a lunatic man, who fell down a hill in a storm, and was found by a policeman.

His legs, it is true, were somewhat in the way, and his hat rather tight, if a boy might say; but he landed all right at the bottom of the hill. And for that I know, is it true or still.

You smile at the story, and wonder how folks can get so far from their brains as to believe that a man would go down a hill on a much worse thing than a pig walking.

Some are going down at full speed on their pride, and others who on their anxious side; but the strangest way of taking that ride.

Beware of such coasting, or like Jack and Gill, you'll make every rock in getting down hill. Beware, it is with what other evils you see, never's nothing like a sure down hill one.

OLD ABEL'S MILLSTONE.

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"Understand me, Abel; but my father and myself are perfectly satisfied with the amount of my share."

"Many thanks to you, sir, for the saying of it; but nothing short of the full sum will satisfy me. At the time (eight years ago) my father was worth a hundred and fifty pounds in round numbers. I mean to pay it every farthing, please Heaven, if I live long enough. If I die, I hope Polly'll keep up the payment round."

"But really, Abel, I don't like taking this money. I am sure these payments must cripple you terribly."

"I feel something on my conscience which is worse than hunger or cold, and it won't be easy until I've paid you all. There's five pounds I've got to pay you for the interest, because of Polly's illness in the spring; but I hope to make it more next time. If you enter the sum in this book and add it up, you'll find it makes ninety pounds."

"Ninety pounds exactly. Well, if you insist on my taking the money, I suppose I must. Is your daughter married yet?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Well, I'm afraid it's higher than I like. What you disapprove of her choice?"

"Oh, no, not that. I think it's a good boy will. He's sober, honest and manly; and all that'll hold in the long run. But I'd rather she hadn't anybody after her—least of all a man who's got a debt of 'twixt you and me."

"A debt that, as you know, we already consider discharged."

"I don't see how it can be, Mr. Baker, junior. However, I'm a-keeping you. Good night, sir; and many thanks for your kindness."

With that Abel Webb retreats, hat in hand; and bowing to Baker, junior, with a respectful nod, he turns and disappears by and by at the half glass door opening to the outer office. Arrived here he once more thanks the young partner of Baker & Co., and then, as he goes, he looks at the clock and finds it is half past twelve.

It is the dusk of an October evening, and brisk dapper young men are hurrying along the streets, and a crowd of numbers, of the delights of home or the intoxicating pleasures they expect to find elsewhere.

The large warehouses are closed, and the gas burners and the grimy chambers appropriated to those who have no other means of remaining in the premises after business hours. Abel Webb takes scant notice of what is passing around him. He is a little man, with a sharp nose, and a pair of eyes that have years of unremitting toil, anxiety, trouble and heavy disappointment weigh heavily.

His hair is as white as the hoarfrost, and his eyes are dim and weary. He has a small, dark hollow beneath his eye, and his face appears a few years older than he really is; but despite his puny stature, his weather-beaten aspect and the wrinkles of age, he is as energetic and as full of life as a young man.

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