GRAFFIELD;

A DECORATION DAY STORY.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING STAR BY WILL CARLETON.

CHAPTER I.

THE TOWN CEMETERY at North Graffield, Mass., was a not unusual collection of quaint and mournful outdoor pictures, all painted, consciously and unconsciously, by the living and the dead. Hardly any one called it a cemetery in those days; it was a "graveyard" only in the simple but forcible dialect of the townspeople.

In refreshing contrast to this little dreary village of the dead was the village of the living near by—full of New England thrift and energy. The people, old and young, were as lively and gay as if they were a separate race and never expected to die, as had those in the little quiet municipality on the hill.

This field of tired-out laborers contained an evolution of tombstones, epitaphs and monuments. There were little brown sand-stone slabs, some of them 200 years old, the names and figures appearing in curve and angle sharp and distinct, as if ancient Egyptian artists had done them. There were square marble tombstones, blurred and blotched by storm and decay; there were a few pathetic wooden ones, planted there by poverty; there were invisible ones, left so by the hand of neglect. It was impressive to notice how different were the abodes of the living, who could care for themselves, and the dead, who could not.

Still there was in the cemetery one ample Scoth granite vase, containing flowers of memory and glistening complacent smiles from its sleek sides at the plebeian landmarks around it. This was to emphasize the posthumous importance of a wealthy Boston tea dealer, who had come back to rest in sight of the mountains from which, as a boy, he descended to fortune, and a tall mast of granite was employed by the proud little village to rehearse daily the fact that said village had once furnished a governor for the state commonwealth. There were even two or three old vaults in a corner of the field, in which lay stored broken images that had held some of the prouder spirits of the neighborhood.

It was the 29th of May of a year not long after the war closed. Two middle-aged men were looking carefully among the miniature hilltops, which, though covering death, were themselves overspread with the life of thrifty vegetation.

These men were ex-soldiers. They seemed not particularly strong in their movements; one of them limped and the other raised his right arm with difficulty. They carried small American flags, the staffs of which they were plunging in the ground at the heads of all the soldiers' graves they could find; these were put there for the purpose af announcing that such graves were to be covered with flowers at tomorrow's decoration. A little girl, the grandchild of one of them, was wandering more or less near by and occasionally singing softly, half to herself, to keep the child imagination from the belief that her doll was crying.

"It seems to me, Barker," one of the men said, "as if I was a walkin' round on a crowded steamboat in the night, or at a fair, or somethin', where a lot of old neighbors got caught out away from home an' laid down on the floor, anywhere they could catch it, an' went to sleep. I find myself steppin' careful, every once in awhile, as if for fear of hurtin' some on 'em. I don't believe there's hardly one here (except them that slipped away 'fore I was born) but what if they'd get right up an' look me in the eyes we'd know each other."

Barker did not reply, but seemed to be listening in a way which to the other was more complimentary than an answer. The notes of a sax-horn bugle came softly up from the valley village near by. It was the leader of the brass band which was to play at tomorrow's ceremonies. He was chanting that old war ode, "We Shall Meet, but We Shall Miss Him," and each note sounded to the soldiers like an old friend.

"There's folks here from every house in town, Barker," he continued. "Folks that rattled aroun' so when they was alive an' took up so much room you wouldn't of thought they'd ever be covered up like this. People that was so self-standin' an' so independent like you'd never've guessed they'd submit to lyin' in a graveyard with just a rough stone wall round it. But here they be—quiet as you please—under our feet."

Barker still framed his replies in deep but sympathetic silence. The little girl was softly humming "Rest for the Weary," or something of the kind, rocking her doll, which she imagined now to have fallen asleep. She half sat, half lay, on the ground, and leaned up against a child's grave, as she did it.

"Here's Captain Stubbers, Barker. What an up-and-at-it man he was in all military matters before the war! He recruited the first company of peaceful soldiers we ever had here since old trainin' times—when we thought war was just somethin' to be read about in the history books, an' spoke in pieces at school, an' played with by marchin' from one end o' the town to the other an' back ag'in. Captain Stubbers used to declare war in this easy-goin' town about once a month, an' git all the young fellers around here taggin' after him with muskets on their shoulders an' four drums, three fifes an' a triangle ahead to bait 'em along. Why, they followed him like sheep a bein' salted. How straight the captain used to march! He looked as if he had had his head an' shoulders took off an' set on ag'in a little further back. When the war broke out he never got any more southerly than Washington; he was took sick an' had to resign an' come home. But he was al'ays marshal o' the day at political meetin's an' the Fourth o' July—al'ays top o' the shelf, a little higher than the other dishes. You never would o' thought that he would submit to a graveyard. He took partic'lar pains all through the war not to. But here he is—right down almost under my left foot."

Barker remembered the captain, every inch of him. He had been orderly sergeant in this company that, as an organization, never saw a battle—not even a sham one, and he was afterward an orderly private in a regiment of whom only a fifth part brought peace home with them.

"Here's old John J. Partridge's present location," continued the other. "What a manner old John J. had! He was one o' your village dukes—a reg'lar old out-an'-out high cockalorum. When I was a boy I used to straighten up an' look as interestin' as I could, an' kind o' pleadin' like, ef I saw him comin' along the street, in hopes he would give me a nod. He was considered rich in them days; wuth prob'ly ten thousand dollars, easy.

"An' here is Johnny Wilson," continued the impromptu historian, stabbing a mound with one of the miniature flags in the head of a low, humbly marked grave. "What a fish! He may be sober now, for he has been dead quite a good while, but ef so he ain't responsible. An' still he was the life o' our whole company when he wasn't in the guard house."

Just then a young lady rode slowly along the little clay street that skirted one side of the burying ground. Her strong, black horse seemed to love every motion of the bridle rein or whip, and to more than obey it. She was a girl to be obeyed, with her large black eyes and stately manners, and still it was evident that the black horse was in love with her rather than in fear. The eyes, while imperial in their expression, could be tender and appealing at very short notice. And one never knew which of the two methods of ruling she was about to adopt.

She was known throughout the country as "The governor's granddaughter," being descended from the great man now lying under the monument. People do not always like those they look up to; but everybody liked, respected and feared her at the same time. She had a great deal of the old governor's governor blood, as well as the sweetness of another line of ancestors. It was rumored that she was soon to be married to the ex-tea dealer's nephew, who had just inherited a couple of millions, all made out of tea in Boston, and it was hoped and believed in the village that she would make that $2,000,000 into a series of glittering fragments before the matrimonial bond had long been consummated. Her first lover had drifted south just before the war, driven there, it was raid, by her continued half refusal to wed him. He finally married south, joined the confederate army, died in its service, and his coffin, with what few remains it held, unembalmed as they had been, had finally been brought north and buried a few feet from where the two northern ex-soldiers now stood. They looked at each other and smiled significantly.

"An' that girl puts me in mind, Barker," said Russell, "that right here's a man I don't know exactly what to do with. This Albert Sutherland here was a soldier, an' they say he was a strictly business fighter, too; but he fit—he fit—on the wrong side. What d'you say; had we better give him a flag, Barker, or no? I can't decide whether we'd better try to make him into a Union soldier or not; it's hard enough to reconstruct a live southerner, but when it comes to a dead one I don't know exactly how to take hold."

"It's a difficult thing to settle down alongside of your judgment, Russell," replied the hitherto silent man, "whether to decorate Albert or not. I've been tryin' to appoint 'yes' or 'no' as answer to that 'ere question ever since we came in here. These boys we have been plantin' signals on will be just covered with flowers tomorrow, an' they deserve it, too. Why do they deserve it? Because they fit on the right side!—an' here's this fellow, right in here with them who fit right ag'in 'em—maybe killed some of 'em—an' the question arises, hed he ought to have flowers or thorns? I have heard some say, 'Is he entitled to any place in this graveyard at all?'"

"Well, Barker," rejoined the other, "it's more than a day's hard work for the head an' heart to decide what any one deserves after he's dead. I suppose God Almighty is the only one that ought to consider himself competent to do that; an' this man's dead."

"Yes. I s'pose he is," replied the other. "That is, the body department of him; but I ain't so sure concerning the remainder."

"Well, the remainder of him is a good ways off, probably, anyhow, Barker," replied his companion, drily. "Far enough away so we needn't have any bother with it."

"I've been a thinkin' about that, too," replied Barker. "There's a few people believes that when a man dies without havin' done up his life to his own satisfaction or any one else's, he gets back here, some way, an' spies around to try if he can't fix it up different."

"Ghosts?" inquired Russell, with a laugh in his tone. As this sonorous monosyllable was pronounced the little girl forgot about the doll, raised a small shapely head and opened her eyes wide, and as round as the third letter of the word. Already a mention of the weird race of disembodied spirits had power to thrill her.

"Yes, ghosts," replied Barker. "I didn't use to believe in 'em, an' ain't dead sure that I do now. It's one of these things almost everybody believes in a little; things a fellow can have confidence in some of the time, and then ag in he can't. I ain't sure whether I believe in 'em today or not; but I did several times durin' the war.

"One night, lyin' in my tent in Virginny, arter a hard day's work, marchin'—marchin'—marchin'—I was just in that queer place where thinkin' stops and dreamin' begins, when I spied a man who stood right up over me as plain as I can see you now, an' plainer too; for my eyes don't get any stronger as I grow old. That was my brother, that I never agreed with very well, an' hadn't met for some years, and can't really say that I wanted to. 'Hello, Jim,' he says, in his queer off-hand way; 'I stopped in a minute to apologize for never agreeing with you, and to make an explanation why we never understood each other, why we couldn't hook our ideas and feelings together, but I've found out that it wasn't either of our faults. It won't be piled up ag'in either of our doors; it'll all come out right before long; it was the mistake of some of our forefathers, generations ago. It'll all be explained when we see each other again, and we shall be as good friends as we ought to be—I can't stop but a minute now—good-bye.' Sam died that same evenin' in Buell's army, hundreds of miles away."

"Just a kind of half think and half dream," objected Russell.

"Well, maybe it was; but it's a kind of half dream I don't have every night in the week," replied his companion. "At any rate, I believed in ghosts for a month or two after that. Then, for a year or more, it seemed to me it was all nonsense ag'in. But just as the war was over, an' we a goin' to start for home the nex' day, an' I was as happy as any time in my whole life—about midnight I woke almost up, an' my little boy, that I s'posed was to home, safe and well, he come an' put his arms round my neck——"

This part of the story was not finished. There was a miniature grave in one corner of the cemetery that concluded the faltering speech. Russell quietly placed a flag at the head of the boy's tomb before he left the inclosure.

"An' then it's run along from that time to this," continued Barker. The little girl was now walking hand in hand with him, her head down. She knew that the little dead boy in the grave, shorter even than she was, had been her "Uncle Freddie." She had dreamed a great deal by that tiny little mound, thinking how nice it would have been, had he lived, to have a "baby uncle," forgetting that he would have grown by this time much larger than she.

"It's run along from that time to this," continued the old man, thoughtfully. "But last night I was comin' along, in the furder edge of the evenin', past the graveyard; I was sort of old-man tired, an' maybe a little sleepy; I leaned up ag'in one of the fence posts an' fell to considerin' about the different folks I had known that hed all come here to dwell at last—just as you was a thinkin' a little while ago. I can't believe I got asleep, an' I don't jedge it cud have been a dream. It seemed to me that Albert Sutherland rose straight up from behind an old wide gravestone, an' I cud see him as well as any one could be made out in the night. Then it appeared as if he spoke, an' says: 'Jimmy, is that you?' (He used to call me 'Jimmy' even when he was a little boy, and I liked it, from him.)

"I didn't seem able to get up any answer; couldn't say a word; nothin' pertainin' to me would move, exceptin' my hair, and that was tryin' to get away by creepin' up torge the top of my head. All the reserdue of me just hung onto that gate post, an' stared. But the ghost went right on a talkin'—or so it appeared to me. 'Jimmy,' it said, 'I can't stay away. I had to come back, even for ever so little a time. I'm now in hell, Jimmy, actually in hell. I can't bear to think that my father an' mother is both down on me so because I fought on the other side. What could I do, old friend? My wife was all southern; her relatives, that had been kind an' true an' honorable to me from the minute I first got there, a poor yankee schoolmaster—they was all southerners; the air was full of it and I had to breathe. The south seemed to me a country within a country; and if it stepped out, wasn't I still in my own adopted land? What was the whole country to any of us except an adopted one? All our ancestors came from other parts of the world. An' so—I enlisted—in the confederate army. An' then down came a letter from my dear old Yankee father—I had always loved him, to say nothing of my sweet mother'—here the ghost seemed to me to hitch a little an' choke like—'I had hoped to bring my wife home on a visit next year, and she would have made friends here with everybody in two days—but down came this letter from my father, and it said:

"'You have joined the enemies of your country and are as much of a traitor as Benedict Arnold ever was. More, he fought in favor of the nation before he betrayed it, and you have never done anything for it, except to live on its bounty and enjoy its protection. Coward!

"'You had the best of New England blood in your veins and as good teaching as I was able to provide. All the worse that you have done as you did.

"'You have probably fallen into such a slough of treachery and disgrace that the contempt of a mother and the curse of a father are of no account to you; but remember, traitor, you have them. However this unhappy war may terminate, never presume to come near my door again—never send us a word. You are not even dead to me; you are as though you never existed. I do not say good-bye—any more than I would to a stone or a stick.'

"And then the ghost continued ahead—on its own hook: 'I went through the war, Jim, as bravely as I could, and tried to do my duty. But it bore hard on my home. Long before it was over my wife was dead, my dearest friends killed or self-exiled and—is it any wonder if I should hail death as a relief?

"'Tell me about my father and mother. Do you know whether they still hate me? Do you know——'

"And just then a girl an' a feller came along spoonin' and I roused up, an' the ghost was gone."

"Well, I declare, Barker," replied the other, "you are gettin' queer, no mistake. I al'ays thought you was dreamy, an' had too much imagination to the square inch; but this is a beat, even on yerself, to say nothin' about yer memory, in bein' able to repeat all that. Do you suppose a spirit, just from the eternal world, is apt to stand t'other side of a fence post from you, with its elbow up on one o' the rails, an' give you its war record? From all I've ever heerd concernin' the ghost pop'lation they're too dignified to say much. Their best hold seems more to be in the appearin' line than anything else. At any rate, there's few people ever had grit enough to stan' an' listen to their family history. An' I don't think you would, Barker, if the thing had re'lly occurred, instid of your imaginin' or dreamin' it. You see, the way I look at it is this: you come along here, tired out, an' ready for a nap, anyhow; you lean up ag'inst that'ere fence post an' get to thinkin'—thinkin' hard when a man is sleepy is cousin to dreamin'; you know enough facts to make this dream out of—a man kin dream a good deal in a few seconds—even in an instant, they say; an' that all happens to you before that couple's coming along an' wakin' of you up. Then you think maybe you've seen a ghost—of course your habits had been perfectly regular all day——"

Barker laughed good naturedly, though uneasily. To tell the truth the last remark struck him where he was a bit weak. "Well, call it a dream, if you want to," he replied, "but if it was it was the longest an' most business-like dream I ever had, an' held together the best. As for the memory part of it, I don't suppose I told it just as the ghost did, but what it said is all under my brain pan, an' all I've got to say is that I never dreamed a whole column full of a newspaper before. But we may as well quit argyin' an' go home an' get ready fer tomorrow."

The sun had set and night was commencing early. A huge white cloud had broken and rolled like an avalanche of mist from one of the neighboring mountains and completely filled the little New England valley. "It's the ghost of a storm," laughed Russell.

They had by this time completed their work of finding the soldiers' graves—fortunately, too, for the suddenly arrived low-flying clouds would have made the task a hard and doubtful one. They prepared to go, gathering up the two or three flags that remained. All at once they missed the little girl. "Margie! Margie! where are you?" they shouted.

They could not get any reply for some time, except that perhaps, now and then, a tombstone answered them back with a dreary echo out of the pale night that enveloped it.

But after a few minutes the little girl suddenly appeared to them. Her cheeks were pale, her blue eyes open as widely as their environment would permit. She had been running, and breathed heavily. Her doll was clutched tightly in one of her little white hands, with utter disregard to its comfort.

"Oh, I saw it—I saw it—I saw it!" she gasped.

"Saw what, you little desertin' daughter of the regiment?" laughed Russell.

"The ghost!" exclaimed the child, her blue eyes flashing with unhealthy excitement. "It came out of the old tomb. It kind of rose right up and tried to get where I was. It spoke and said: 'Little girl, don't be afraid. I won't hurt you.' And I answered, 'I guess you won't if I can help it,' and ran right toward where I heard you calling me."

"You see what a bad effect your spook stories have on the infant mind," said Russell, jokingly. "The little thing don't mean to lie, but she listened to every word you said, an' now she's got the ghost distemper herself."

"Maybe the little girl saw the same one that I did," suggested Barker.

"Perhaps," laughed the other ironically. "They say children can see spirits when no one else is able to. Maybe that explains both cases. P'raps you've entered your second childhood, Barker. But, after all, I'm inclined to think we can explain the whole thing so far as you are concerned on the ground that spirits is apt to call forth spirits."

Barker shook his head in half-sulky silence, and they left the little settlement of the dead, with its buried fragments of humanity, its mists and its mysteries.

CHAPTER II.

The little village and surrounding townships turned out very creditably the next day to decorate their soldiers' graves. The sun was as bright and life-giving as if it had never seen a funeral; there were two or three companies of soldiers, commanded by numerous officers, one of whom had succeeded in becoming colonel in time of profound peace; there was a brass band, which might have reconciled the whole population of the cemetery to death, could they have awakened long enough to hear one tune, and there was a large number of citizens, not caring particularly for public display of grief, but many of whom kept their offerings to the country in this little place and now wanted to typify their thoughts and feelings toward them with the most beautiful flowers that it was possible to find.

Among these was a sturdy, firm-featured old man who might have been a Cromwell, a Bismarck or a Gladstone if blessed and cursed with the same environments, who had many of the elements of greatness within him, more intense, perhaps, from the limited scope of their display. Many of these were shown with the features of this old semi-mountaineer, but that distinctly New England product—determination—was the most prominent one. The reticent soil and unbending climate of his life-long home had conspired to make this the most noticeable portion of his nature.

His wife was a motherly woman who had evidently started out in life with a disposition of unqualified sweetness, but had from year to year absorbed some of the granite of her husband's character. It is impossible for a sharply contrasting couple to live long together in peace without obtaining more or less of each other's qualities. Nor had her own influence been idle all these years. There was an occasional line of tenderness among the marks of time and emotion in the old man's face, as if they had crept there with mild but dogged perseverance and clung in spite of everything.

"Poor, poor Albert," sighed the motherly woman, as they drove toward the cemetery. "I do not know whether they will let us decorate his grave or not. There was so much talk against even our burying him here when we brought him home from the south."

"But he was buried here, all the same," said the old man, bringing his teeth together firmly. "It's my cemetery lot, and there wasn't enough fanatics in town to keep our own flesh and blood out of it." And the same old hand that had forwarded a father's curse to the only son because he had joined the confederate army came down with a crash upon the arm of the wagon seat, in defense of that same son—or, rather, of the old gentleman himself.

"Poor, poor Albert," repeated the old lady. "He couldn't help doing what he did. He thought he was right."

"Well, I ain't so sure of whether he even thought he was right," objected the old man, giving his favorite road horse two or three gentle but decided touches with the whip. "I'm inclined to think (an' to hope, too,) that he let others do his thinkin' for him." (And his heart added, if not his tongue: "He ought to have let me do it for him; then it would have been done right." The old gentleman's countenance and manner showed that he was perfectly ready to do the thinking for almost anybody.)

The wife did not answer; a sudden little storm of tears had swept across the blue sky of her eyes. It came as if having a right to, for it was a daily visitor. Every mother knows that there had not been a single wakeful hour when she had not thought of her only son.

"Well, we're here," said the old gentleman at last in a dry tone. He did not like display and could not help making little sharp, biting, Yankeeish remarks when he saw it.

"The soldiers are all out," he muttered. "It's the same old story again—war in the time of peace. It's queer how many fellows there are who love to put roosters' feathers in their hats and march about whenever they can get the chance. Some of these chaps know how to march, though—they did it in the army; all commanded now by a peace officer."

The sweet-faced old wife did not say anything; a deep problem was in her heart. She had brought along a few bouquets to place upon the soldiers' graves, and a fine one had been reserved for that of the son whom she had loved and lost. She could not bear to think of all the other soldiers getting wreaths and her son having none. And yet, in conversation that morning, her stern old husband had decided that the boy was not worthy of any flowers; that although the young man was his own son he should be made an example of even in his grave. It was the Roman father act brought into New England.

The procession was a good one for a country town, and the soldiers made a very creditable display. There was also among their number a society of Odd Fellows, a company of firemen and a long line of school boys and girls—all anxious to do their share in decorating the graves of the dead heroes. Although it was a holiday, it was a mournful one, and seemed much like a great open-air funeral. The day had not then become as it has in many places since, a leisure time of pleasure and festivity; the graves were too new; the deaths were all recent.

This field of the dead was not all filled with tombs. A portion of it on one side was still vacant country, very suggestive to those who might some time reside in it. Part of it was indeed occupied today, but by living people. A small stand had been erected for speakers and musicians, and this was surrounded by the large crowd that gathered. The glee club turned for the day into a dirge club, sung a selection, half hymn, half song, praising the fallen heroes; a prayer was offered by the most popular clergyman in town, and then came the oration by a neighboring judge, who still bore marks upon his face of the fatigue which he had experienced in trying to keep politics out of it while writing it. But the exercises were over at last; another song was sung, entitled "The Nation Weeps and Mourns Today," in which the comedian basso seemed singularly out of place, and then occurred a hush—almost as painful as that at a funeral when the conductor of the same rises to say that the congregation will now view for the last time the departed one. As if in sympathy with the feelings of the people a mist, something like that of the evening before, which had been slowly gathering all the morning, became now deeper and deeper, and filled the place. It was as if a pale, drooping cloud had died and been brought to the cemetery for burial.

The marshal of the day arose, drew his sword from the scabbard with a peaceable-if-can, forcible-if-must flourish, and said:

"Fellow citizens, we have now come to the saddest and yet most important part of the duties of this day. It is to strew flowers upon the graves of the soldiers who lie within this cemetery. In order to do this gracefully and in order we have arranged the following plan:

"We have here three committees of young ladies, who took charge of the flowers that were contributed to the occasion. I have the names of all the brave soldiers who sleep in our little cemetery. I will read the names in the order in which they are written down in the list. As each name is pronounced some one who knew the owner will rise and pronounce a short jeulogy upon him. (The marshal had heard the word "eulogy" pronounced in great shape, once, by a distinguished public reader, and had never been able since to utter it without a "j"). Then the young ladies will find his grave and put the flowers upon it, which flowers will be from all of us—from the whole town and country around. After this is over, we can each wander through our little cemetery and make such additions to the floral tributes as each may desire."

The marshal, a Miles Standish in words at least, had spent all the night before committing to memory this little speech, which had been composed jointly by his wife and sister-in-law, and felt much relieved when he arrived at the friendly final words, "as each may desire." He then said, in an entirely different tone:

"The first grave upon my list is that of Henry Worden. His uncle, Nathaniel Worden, will now pronounce his jeulogy,' after which his grave will be decorated by floral committee No. 1."

Nathaniel Worden arose and gave his late nephew a series of recommendations which would have surprised the poor boy, brave as he was, could he have heard them. "He fit an' he fit, an' he fit fer his country an' not ag'in it, as some that's in here did," shouted the old man. "I ain't anything to say ag'in them that fit ag'in it, only, if they hadn't fit ag'in it we shouldn't hev had to be here today, weepin' fur them that fit fur it. An' now the poor sainted boy lies there with only a third part of his life lived out; an' though I'm his uncle, as hadn't ought to be, I want to say right here that it's my opinion that if we had all the flowers that grows on the sides of every mountain in sight o' this—this—camp o' the dead there wouldn't be any more than enough to tell his praises. Yes, friends and feller citizens, he fit fer his country, an' not ag'in it."

Half a dozen pretty girls, composing committee No. 1, now eagerly grasped huge bouquets and disappeared in the mists to decorate the grave of Henry Worden.

"The second grave upon my list," continued the marshal, "is that of Samuel Taylor. His cousin, Peter Taylor, who was in the army with him, will pronounce his eulogy."

Peter Taylor rose, his eyes full of tears. He tried hard to speak, but could not for a time. At last he blurted out:

"There wasn't no Johnny ever seen a stitch o' his coat tails, now I tell ye. He was a lookin' right torge 'em all the time. The night he died——"

The speech here broke down, but its fragments fell upon the people with more effect than symmetrical oratory could have done. Many of the honest townspeople shed tears; the dead man's mother wept audibly; few of the other speeches which followed produced so great an effect, though some were studied and elaborate.

At last the marshal of the day looked again at his paper and said:

"The next name on the list is Albert Sutherland. It was put here against my advice by the majority of the committee, but it's my duty to read it. You all know he was a soldier—on the wrong side. I don't know whether there's any one here wants to say any eulogy on him or not."

The silence that followed seemed the deepest that had ever been known in that cemetery. Nobody had a word to say; the very stillness seemed to the mother of the young man a voice crying against him. The mist among the people and the graves grew deeper and deeper.

All at once the hard old father rose and came around in front of the stand. He was well known and respected, and liked as one might like a cold, bracing winter day, and the people all listened to him. His voice was firm, and this made the occasional slight falterings in it all the more noticeable and pathetic.

"My friends and neighbors," he said, "this is one of the most painful days in my life, and there have been plenty of 'em—more and more of 'em as I've got older. I didn't want to be here today, and still I couldn't help coming—for it's the duty of everybody to stand up for their country on such a day as this, and I loved some of these boys here as if they were my own sons. I'm said to be a kind of hard-hearted old fellow, and my nature, I suppose, is more or less strewn with rocks, but there wasn't a single one of these soldiers went down into the south country but my heart went with him, though my body was too old to do so. You all know that Albert, whose name has just been read here, was down south when the war began teaching school, and had married a very sweet, handsome southern girl, according to her photograph, which he sent me. Friends and neighbors, I don't deny that I was proud of my son when he was here among us. Who wouldn't have been? But he went into the wrong army (although he claimed he had a good excuse for it), but it's my opinion no man ever had a good excuse for fighting against his country. It made me angry, more so than I can tell, and I disowned him, put him away out of my heart and wrote and told him so. I kept the feeling up all through the war, but when the news came that he was dead I couldn't help having him brought home, and here he is in this graveyard. And somehow I find, now the war is through, that the old feelings keep coming back to me which I had before he left home. Something keeps saying to me: "He wasn't entirely to blame; there's two sides to every question, even if one is the biggest." He seems more and more like a son, and less and less like a foreigner. So I just want to say a word or two in favor of my son. He made a mistake in life, but before that he was a straight, honest, manly fellow. He was as good a son as ever a father need have and his mother loved him——"

The mother commenced sobbing quietly, but deeply. These were the first tender words she had heard her husband speak of the boy for years. Everybody was listening intently, painfully, tears were in some eyes. The old man continued:

"We—we have a few flowers here, which, if permitted, we would like to lay on his grave. We——"

The old man broke down for the first time in his history. The whole company did the same. A revulsion of feeling or the the revelation of a feeling that already existed came over them. They had all liked Albert when he was a boy and they seemed to enter into the same spirit now. Three young ladies, led by governor's granddaughter, quietly took large bouquets from those remaining and vanished in the mist toward the Sutherland lot.

But at that moment the whole assemblage looked startled, then frightened, then broke into a panic. The ghost of Albert Sutherland came slowly out of the mist and stood before them.

The orator of the day, who had just said in his speech, "So just was our cause that one northerner could easily put to flight two confederates," leaped headlong from the back of the platform and ran, even at sight of the ghost of one, leaving his laboriously written oration behind. The brass band followed him, throwing their instruments in every direction. The Glee Club were not far in the rear and the general public indulged in a stampede. Russell and Parker retreated a few steps, formed ranks mechanically and stood in the "ready" position between advancing ghost and retreating people, instinctively holding each a phantom gun at "charge bayonets."

Old Mr. Sutherland held his ground and glared at the new comer. But the mother went nearer and nearer to the apparition. She did not seem afraid of it; she walked up deliberately and put her hand upon its shoulder. "Albert, Albert, Albert," she murmured.

To her surprise, but not terror, the ghost did not vanish, give way and yield like thin air to her hand, as a well regulated apparition should have done. It put two very substantial arms around her, kissed her, and called her "mother" for the first time in many years.

"Oh, my poor boy, my poor boy," she began, weeping piteously again as soon as she realized that he was alive. "And so you are not dead at all," she murmured. "Poor, poor boy! Why, we have you buried out there in our lot, and some young ladies are putting flowers upon you now!"

The young man smiled sadly.

"I was almost dead in the hospital," he explained, "and the man they buried was marked with my name and number by mistake. When you finally sent for me, they forwarded that body, or what little was left of it, supposing it was mine; and it is now poor Pat O'Connor that the girls are covering with flowers out yonder."

Meanwhile, the Roman father, whose square, hard head had not supposed for an instant that his newly found son was a ghost, had slowly come up to him, deliberately put his arms around the young man's neck and kissed him on the forehead. It was the first time that he had ever been known to do so since Albert graduated from a baby into a boy; he had even been chary of his caresses when his son was an infant. And amid the warm greeting he had still a word or two of reproach.

"Why didn't you come and see us at home?" he asked. "What do you spring yourself on us in this way for?"

"I did not know how you felt toward me?" replied the son. "I have lurked about here for days, even hiding some of the time in an old tomb, trying to find out whether—whether I was forgiven, but they ran away as soon as they saw me. I did not know, too, whether my old neighbors would endure me. I hid behind the monument there to see the decoration ceremonies. When I heard your speech and saw how it was received I hesitated no longer, but showed myself to you all."

The people in general had by this time found out that there was no ghost; it had been whispered among the fugitives from spiritdom, and it was interesting to notice how many there were who knew all the time that it was Albert himself, and merely retreated to assure their retreating friends of the fact. The feeling in his favor grew and increased.

Just as the first stragglers of the late congregation began to rally on their way back the young ladies had come from decorating Albert Sutherland's supposed grave. Three of them screeched and ran, but the governor's granddaughter stood her ground and walked nearer to the ghost.

"And so you are not dead, after all?" she said, her manner half jesting and half in earnest. "I am so glad!" And she held out her white hand.

"And why should you be glad?" murmured Albert. "You, who care nothing for me!"

"Oh, we all care for you," she replied, trying to force back the tear pearls from the half-open caskets of her eyes.

"You who jilted me—who scorned me—who really sent me south——"

"But you found some one you liked better down there," she replied, still pressing back the pearls, "and you married her."

"Yes, I married her," replied the materialized ghost sullenly, "and I'd do it again under the same circumstances if she would have me. She was a hundred times better than I was and the loveliest—that is, one of the loveliest women I ever knew."

This little outburst of half spite, half loyalty, affected the governor's granddaughter differently from what it would have a smaller nature. She merely replied:

"I don't blame you. Some of these southern ladies are very good and winsome."

"And you," continued the ex-Yankee confederate, "you went and became engaged to a Boston dude because he had a few tea chests of money."

This also pleased the New England beauty. She did not bridle, or say or imply that that was her own affair. She answered simply and half laughingly:

"If being proposed to fifty-two times by a young man and refusing him fifty-three is becoming engaged to him, then you are right."

"But what could I do?" asked Albert, gloomily. "I had to have love! You would not give it to me. She was a sweet, lovely woman. You remember, you always were raving about the book 'David Copperfield.' She and I read it together, and I called her my Agnes. I had told her about you—we had nothing apart from each other—and she called you my 'Dora.' Only, she used to say, long before she died, laughing wearily, for she was never very well, 'You married your Agnes (as you mistakenly call me) first. If anything happens to me you must go back and tell her that I don't believe you ever understood her—that if I had known her I should have loved her and she would not have disliked me—tell her——'"

The tear pearls were now having their own way in the proud eyes of the governor's granddaughter. "Have you her picture?" she interrupted softly.

The young man produced it from next his heart. The northern beauty bent over the southern one. One glance told the quick-witted and deep-hearted girl that her innocent and unconscious rival might some time in the great future be one of her dearest friends. She kissed the picture passionately. "Dear, dear sister," she murmured. And then to Albert:

"She is going home with me. You may come for her tomorrow evening—if you wish. Now you must talk with your parents—and your old friends—all of whom are ready to greet you kindly."

Everybody gathered around Arthur Sutherland and wished him well; even the sun came out again and saluted him. It was the first time that the village ever drew a long breath and realized that the war was over. The band gathered up their ghost-scattered instruments and played "Hail Columbia," "Dixie's Land" and "The Star Spangled Banner," all within five minutes; but did not succed in raising any more of the dead. Margie, the "daughter of the regiment," recovered from her fright and made close friends with the reformed specter. Everybody seemed happy, and with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, with thankfulness to heaven for so suddenly straightening the tangled threads of his life, the confederate ghost went homeward with his rejoicing father and mother, commencing a new life and a new career.

RIDING IN THIS CITY.

Women Easier Than Men to Teach—Cheaper to Hire Than to Own a Horse.

"WOMEN LEARN TO RIDE MORE quickly and easily than men," said Washington's most popular riding master to a STAR writer. "Why that should be so I cannot exactly tell, but my impression has always been that they acquire anything more readily than the opposite sex, possibly because they give more undivided attention to whatever they are engaged at. Very often a lady will become a fair rider with only fifteen or twenty lessons, whereas a man after twenty-five or thirty lessons will sometimes know less of the art of equitation at the end than he did at the beginning. Easiest of all to teach are children, who frequently get a fair seat and a pretty good notion of riding in eight or ten lessons. With riding it is somewhat as with swimming—in youth it is learned with much less effort and is never afterward forgotten. The grown person who has understood in childhood how to manage a horse is always at home on the back of such an animal, though many years have elapsed since mounting one.

"The most difficult persons to instruct in the art of riding are those who have been 'at home in the saddle all their lives,' having been accustomed to the management of horses in rural parts or on the plains. They think they know it all, but the only thing they understand is how to gallop. Of the mode of equitation proper for parks and the avenues of a city they have no notion whatever. They are harder to teach than if they had never sat in a saddle before, because they have to begin by unlearning most of what they know. In this respect riding is like dancing, for any dancing master will tell you that the hardest part of his work is to make his pupils relinquish the wrong steps and style which they are apt to have previously acquired. It is almost impossible in many cases to induce individuals who have been used to riding to shorten their stirrups and adopt the correct method for the English saddle. Of course the English style of riding is the only proper one from the point of view of fashion. Even the French have imitated it closely.

HORSE AND RIDER.

"It is always an important matter that rider and horse should be suited to each other. For example, a short and stout man finds a big, round-barreled beast a very uncomfortable mount, because his grip in the saddle is only from the thigh to the knee, whereas the tall and thin man has a grip from thigh to calf. Accordingly, the latter should have the big-bodied animal, while the former should bestride a slim and well-bred horse. Grace and elegance in riding are to a great extent dependent on the individual; no amount of teaching will render a clumsy person graceful on horseback or on foot. In one way women are harder on horses than men, because their weight is not so evenly distributed. On the other hand, men average at least thirty pounds heavier and ride faster; but they exercise better judgment as to gait. A woman, through sheer ignorance, will sometimes spoil a horse.

"Once in a while it happens that a customer spoils one of my horses by hard riding. In such a case I demand payment for the animal. When I hire out a beast worth $200 for $3 for an afternoon I have a right to expect that it shall be returned to me in good condition. It seems to me that it is a mistake for any person of moderate means to keep his own horse in Washington. There can be no doubt that hiring an animal by the month is much cheaper and more satisfactory in every way. A fair saddle horse, with accouterments, costs about $250. The wages of a man are about $40 a month; you cannot get a good one for less. Feed costs $10 a month, shoeing from $3 to $4 a month, and there are other expenses which mount up. Young men here in town sometimes club together and hire one stable and a man for five or six horses. That method is an economy, but it is not nearly so cheap as hiring.

THE RISK OF THE HORSE.

"You see, your horse is apt to get sick or go lame at any time, thus throwing it out of use temporarily. If you hire a beast by the month and such a thing happens your contract entitles you to another animal as a substitute. Again, your stable man may mismanage your horse and underfeed it. All things considered, it is a great saving in expense to pay $3 an afternoon when you want to go riding. The disadvantage of the plan is that you do not get the same horse always, but you can get over that by hiring by the month, when you will always have the same beast, unless something goes wrong with it. You can get a horse by the month for $75, which includes everything, even to fetching it to your door whenever you want it. If you desire to ride twice a day you can do so. You have no anxiety about the animal to interfere with your enjoyment—no groom to scold, nor trouble of any sort. You will see more elegant turnouts for driving hired from livery stables in this city than are had by private owners, except the very rich people, who can afford to throw away money. There are a great many excellent women riders in Washington, but there are fewer young men here who ride than one would expect to find in a town of this size, because not many of them can afford the luxury."

MEN WHO LEFT THE FLAG.

Soldiers Who Deserted From the Union Armies During the War.

MORE THAN 200,000 OF THEM FOUND OTHER THINGS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN FIGHTING—WHY THEY DESERTED AND THE MEANS TAKEN TO REPRESS THE EVIL—A CURIOUS GALLERY OF PORTRAITS.

AWAY UP IN THE TOPMOST ATTIC OF the War and Navy building is stored away, quite out of sight, a very curious and interesting collection of photographs. They are tin types, 600 and odd in number, and are fastened with tacks in rows upon three big parallelograms of plank. Beneath each one is an inscription telling a story of the war, for the pictures are those of deserters from the federal armies during the rebellion.

This assemblage of likenesses includes only those gathered by a single provost marshal. To hold the photographs of all the men who deserted from the ranks of the Union during the war a great many large rooms would be required. When one considers the feelings of patriotism that are supposed to have animated northern hearts during the mighty civil struggle, all beating with one universal throb for the preservation of the country, it is painful to think of the fact that from the beginning to the end of that period of civil strife 268,000 men deserted from the stars and stripes.

The faces in the collection of tin types described afford a strange study. In not a few of them one distinctly recognizes the criminal type. Most of these represent bounty jumpers, who make a business of desertion, running away from one regiment for the purpose of enlisting in another, and thus obtaining by fraud repayment several times over for their patriotism. Inasmuch as $300 was offered to each fresh recruit from October, 1863, to May, 1864, this form of industry was sufficiently profitable to afford inducements to the unscrupulous. One fellow whose picture is tacked to the planks is set down in the memorandum beneath as having deserted no less than twenty-three times, although he was evidently hardly more than a youth. His name was Patrick Gallagher. On the other hand, there are many faces in this little gallery which are decidedly prepossessing.

THE RECORD OF DESERTERS.

The number of men recorded as deserters is considerably in excess of what it should be, inasmuch as it was swelled by the names of many stragglers and other persons who were unavoidably absent from duty, owing to accidents or unreported disability. It is estimated that only about 200,000 soldiers forsook the nation's flag during the war deliberately and of their own free will. These latter figures seem large enough, but it has been correctly said that "no cause is so just or so beloved that war in its behalf will not be attended with desertion by its defenders." Many causes besides cowardice and indifference to duty are operative in such matters—not least of them love and anxiety for kindred and other dependents at home, for whose sake even a patriot may sometimes be induced to run away.

The experience had by the United States respecting desertion and the means of preventing it was got during the rebellion at great cost. A long time passed before it came to be realized that there was but one way to deal effectively with the evil—namely, by the exercise of the utmost severity. So long as lenient measures were applied men dropped out of the ranks by thousands, undeterred by fears of punishment. Lives sacrificed, battles lost and consequent prolongation of the struggle were the fruits of want of vigor in treating the trouble in the early stages of the war. Thus mercy to those who ran away was really a great cruelty to those who remained true to the cause. Among the causes for desertion was the fact that in the beginning of the conflict a majority of the volunteers had no knowledge of military law and discipline.

DESERTERS' STORIES.

Another evil brought about by desertions was the discouragement of recruiting by stories which the deserters spread respecting the alleged harsh treatment and unnecessary hardships imposed upon them by officers in command. It is undeniable that the large bounties offered gave encouragement to runaways, and the maintaining of so costly a system for securing fighting men would have ruined the country financially after a while. Therefore it is contended that a better plan to adopt in the event of another war would be to do away with bounties and grant higher pay to volunteers, who would thus be enabled to make some sort of provision for their families left behind. Naturally individuals who had never experienced military discipline were apt to find it irksome, and it is not surprising that the yarns told by deserters of cruelties which they were obliged to undergo should have done harm. For example, the accounts they gave of having been "tied up by the thumbs"—a comparatively mild punishment for refractoriness—were construed as signifying "hung up by the thumbs," a very different and extremely barbarous performance.

BEFORE THE WAR.

Prior to the beginning of the war the army regulations gave a reward of $10 for the arrest and delivery of a deserter. Such arrests were usually made by the police of the cities for the sake of the reward. During the spring and summer of 1861 large bodies of volunteer troops were called into service and desertions became very frequent. Accordingly, there should have been an increase of the rewards given; but, on the contrary, an order was issued from the adjutant general's office September 7, 1861, reducing the reward for the capture of a deserter to $5, which was to cover all expenses involved. This action, intended as an economy, proved extremely expensive in the long run. It effectively put a stop to arrests, and the mischief grew apace.

THE PROVOST MARSHALS AND DESERTERS.

Several general orders followed at intervals for collecting stragglers and deserters, &c., but it was not until March 3, 1863, that anything really effectual was done. On that date Congress passed the first enrollment act, making it the duty of a provost marshal general in Washington to maintain correspondence with provost marshals in every congressional district respecting deserters and means for their apprehension. The law required all officers in command of regiments and battalions not attached to regiments to report each month the desertions from their commands during the month previous. They were obliged to make out blanks, giving the name, description, residence and probable whereabouts of each such absentee. These reports were duly classified at the office of the provost marshal general in Washington and information was sent to the provost marshals in the various congressional districts about the runaways who might be expected to be found in their respective neighborhoods. The provost marshals were ordered to arrest the delinquents when they could be found.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD.

At the beginning it was found very difficult to get the commanding officers in the field to send their reports of desertions with regularity. Obviously, they were very busy with other things, and such clerical matters fatigued them. However, a way of getting over that trouble was quickly discovered, orders being issued to the effect that the pay of such officers as failed to respond should be stopped until responses were received. After the enrollment act of March 1, 1863, was passed there was no longer any trifling. That law made the harboring, concealing or employing knowingly of a deserter a criminal offense, punishable with imprisonment and crime. About that time it had come to be understood that there was no use in toying with the evil, and the prompt and decisive method of shooting deserters was commonly resorted to in place of the former gentle style of procedure.

REWARDS.

An act approved by Congress March 3, 1865, provided that deserters who failed to report within sixty days should be deemed to have relinquished the rights of citizenship and to be disqualified for holding office. Meanwhile, on July 16, 1863, the reward for arresting a deserter was increased from $5 to $10. Two months later it was further increased to $30, and it remained at that figure until March 11, 1865, when all rewards were discontinued by the Secretary of War. This last general order was subsequently modified to allow a reward of $30 for the arrest and delivery of a deserter from the regular army. After the organizing of the bureau of the provost marshal general, in April, 1863, 76,000 deserters were arrested, averaging about 3,000 a month. Under a section of the act of March 3, 1863, President Lincoln issued a proclamation pardoning all deserters who should voluntarily report before April 1. The number who did so report is not on record.

MANY CASES OF FRAUD.

After the establishment of the system under the provost marshal general two-thirds of those who deserted were arrested. An order of January 5, 1865, directed that all persons who secured exemption from service as recruits by fraud should be proceeded against as deserters. This was designed to remedy an extensive evil, all manner of swindles having been resorted to for the purpose of evading such military duty. Among the most common and most easily detected of these deceptions were pretended physical disabilities. Some would falsely profess to be deaf or dumb, while others would assume afflictions in the way of disease which they did not have. It is a very curious thing to read the list of troubles or deficiencies which were rated as disqualifying recruits for bearing arms. The consumptive was not considered to be so disqualified unless he was very far gone, and likewise with the victims of many other complaints. Curiously enough, a person who stammered or stuttered was not regarded as eligible, nor yet a man who had neither incisors nor canine teeth in one of his jaws. One who had lost through accident or otherwise the whole of his nose was not deemed acceptable as a soldier. A recruit who had only one eye was all right if the eye was a right eye, but if the only eye left was the left eye he was no good.

Queer Hungarian Costumes.

From Harper's Magazine.

The ordinary costume of both sexes at Monostorszeg is simplicity itself. The women wear a high-necked ankle-long chemise of white homespun linen, with full sleeves gathered at the elbow and richly embroidered, usually with blue. Bands of narrow embroidery decorate the waist and the skirt also. This chemise is girded to the body by a thick woolen belt, binding tightly to the figure the upper edge of a narrow apron of striped woolen homespun, very brilliant in color. A kerchief is usually worn on the head and the feet are habitually bare. On Sundays and fete days the girls exchange the coarse garments for others of choicer texture, the chemise being fine and carefully pleated and the apron of mull or muslin, delicately embroidered with white. Tall red morocco boots, with yellow heels and soles and curious pointed toes, adorn or rather disfigure the feet, and around the neck are hung many rows of gaudy glass beads. The hair is elaborately plaited in a broad band, which is brought over to the forehead and then turned back again. This is held in place by dozens of pins with ornamental heads, and all along the edges of the braid behind is a thick row of bits of a fine green aromatic herb, while in the hair itself at the back, as well as around the face, bright-colored geraniums, marigolds and other flowers are skillfully arranged. On their wedding day they cover their heads with a wonderful square structure, more like a pastry cook's piece montee than a bonnet, wear an ample white lace shoulder cape, a brilliant scarlet petticoat, with white lace apron and tall red boots. This dress is preserved with jealous care and is never produced except on Sundays and holidays. The men's costume consists of loose linen trousers, like a divided skirt, a full tunic, a waistcoat with silver buttons, hussar boots and a small round hat. Both sexes have for an outer garment either a sheepskin cloak or a great coat of very thick felt-like white woolen, with broad square collar, and sleeves either sewed up at the bottom or else in short, rudimentary form. These coats, and also the sheepskin cloaks, are often richly and gaudily embroidered.

Two Poker Hands in Tennessee.

From the Pittsburg Dispatch.

He was a quiet-looking elderly man, in a pastoral sort of black broadcloth suit and a felt hat with a broad brim, such as are worn by "colonels" and "majors." Next to him in the car sat two young men, who were telling stories about personal experiences on the road. One of them related with much gusto an encounter which he had recently had with a desperate western man, the weapons being cards. The game was poker, the special occasion was that old familiar "big jack pot" which so often figures in profane history, and two principals were each armed with straight flushes. "It was a dollar limit game," remarked the young man, "and we bet sixty-seven times, and then I called him. He had a sequence flush, queen high, and I had one king high. You should have heard him swear." I noticed that the old man listened with great attention to the story, and at its conclusion he exclaimed with much candid astonishment: "You called him!" The youngster blushed and acknowledged his guilt. "Well! well!" said the old man, shaking his head, "these times is suttenly not what they usen tubbe. You see, I cum from Tennessee, and we an't up to this way er doin' things. Why, I'm playin' a hand yit thet wuz dealt to my pap in '57. Him an' ole Jedge Dubbin of Murfreesboro, they set into a game one night in September of '57, and they bet, an' bet, an' bet. An', when they run outer cash, they bet mules, an' then horses, an' then niggers, an' at las' they tuk to bettin' acres of lan', an' then they run outer everything, an' it was agreed that the han's shud be put in sealed envellups an' marked un' kept in the vault of the bank till both on 'em got more stuff. Well, it went on that way off an' on till the war cum, and the old jedge had died and pop was killed at Seven Pines, an' then young Jim Dubbin he tuk his ole man's place an' I tuk dad's. Well, gen'elmen, we're jist bettin' yit whenever we git the cash, and there ain't no signs of quittin'; but I wud suttinly like to see them han's of pop's an' ole Jedge Dubbin's afore I die," and he sighed a long sigh of patient resignation, while the two youngsters and the other man in the smoking compartment regarded him as one worthy of veneration even if it was only as a liar.

Solving the Domestic Problem.

From Truth.

Mrs. Morris—"Don't you find it hard to get a domestic?"

Mrs. Essex—"I don't try to get a domestic. I get the imported."

A STINGING REBUKE.

Or the Adventure of Johnny and the Bee.

From Judge.

I. II. III. IV. V.

NOODLES GETS INTO TROUBLE.

Being Mistaken for a Colored Lady, He Suffers as to Clothing.

"UPON MY WORD, IT SEEMS TO ME that some of the adventures I get into are extremely embarrassing," said Noodles last night at the Platypus Club.

"Right you are, dear boy," echoed half a dozen of the other fellows. "Do tell us, what is the last?"

"Just wait until I light my cigar, please. Really, you know, it's rather painful to recall the circumstances. I believe that I called your attention to a suit of clothes which I purchased from a capital tailor in New York the other day. You know the one I mean—the pale blue plaid which I had so much trouble in matching with a necktie?"

"Why, certainly," responded the boys in unison. "That suit of clothes is the talk of Washington at present."

"Well," continued Noodles, twirling his mustache, "I think it is pretty much the cheese myself. However, I should rather put it in the past tense than in the present, and therein lies the sadness of the story I was about to tell. I was going along 19th street yesterday immersed in thought——"

"Must have been over your head," interjected Simpkins rudely.

"As I was saying," added Noodles, without regarding the interruption, "I was deeply engaged in thought respecting a remarkably pretty girl who was walking along on the same side of the way about a quarter of a block ahead. Inasmuch as she was going in the same direction I could only see her back, and experience has taught me that the rear view of a young woman is extremely apt to be deceptive. Most of the girls I have pursued at various times in such wise have turned out to be exceptionally ugly from the obverse point of view."

"Never heard of the obverse of a girl," suggested Boggs gravely.

"Never mind. If you will allow me to continue I will remark that just as I was begining to accelerate my pace for the purpose of overtaking the supposed fair one a gate in a fence that I was passing was suddenly flung open and the entire contents of what must have been a very large pan of dish water were thrown directly upon my person. Of course, I was extremely astonished and came to an immediate pause, relinquishing all thoughts of the young lady ahead, while the gate was slammed to in an instant, and I heard a voice from the other side say:

"'Oh, Lordy! I done it.'

"'You are quite correct,' I assented, speaking from the outside of the fence. 'Furthermore, I find myself completely and most unpleasantly soaked. Be kind enough to let me have a few cloths as quickly as possible with which to wipe myself off. If you feel any hesitation about opening the gate you may chuck them over the fence.'

"The mild way in which I spoke induced the African female who had thrown the slops to unbar the portal and admit me to the garden, where she and two small pickaninnies, presumably her offspring, proceeded to remove from my garments what they could of the objectionable fluid which had bedewed them. Their labors were so far effective that I seemed to be considerably worse off when they had finished than when they began.

"'Ise awful grieved, sah,' said the woman, apologetically, as she removed some soup fragments from my coat pockets. 'Fact is I mistook you for a colored lady of ma 'quaintance.'

"'The deuce you did!' I replied.

"'Yes, sah. Dar is a colored lady who lives 'round de corner of de alley. She an' I ain't frien's. Two or t'ree times we've had a scrapple in de street, an' more'n half ob de back hair she's wearin' today once b'longed to me. I have her 'rested Tuesdays and she has me took up Saturdays. De rest of de week——'

"'You are not on speaking terms,' I suggested.

"'No, sah. We throw t'ings. I seen her go by jus' five minutes ago with a shawl ober her haid, like as if she was goin' to de grocery shop on de corner. So, s'posin' dat she'd soon come back, I fetched de pan ob slops an' says to de chillun: "You, Frederick William an' Caroline Evangelina, open de gate quick when I tell you an' we'll spoil de looks ob dat colored lady when she comes along."'

"'So you were lying in wait!' I exclaimed, a better understanding of the occurrence dawning upon me.

"'Yes, sah. We s'posed she'd be back inside er 'bout fo' minutes. By an' by we thought we heerd her footprints, an' jus' as dey got opposite de gate——'

"'You let me have it in the neck,' I interrupted. 'While appreciating the effectiveness of your method of organizing an ambuscade, I might perhaps suggest that its operation could be with advantage a trifle less indiscriminate. For example, some sort of watch tower might be improvised from which Caroline Evangelina or—er—Frederick William would be able to survey the neighborhood and give accurate and timely notice of the approach of friend or foe. This moist substance on the brim of my hat I take to be a remnant of mashed potato. Will you not kindly make an effort to remove it?'

"Well, dear boys," continued Noodles, lighting a fresh cigarette, "after being cleaned up as well as was practicable under the circumstances I once more emerged upon the street. Two doors from the nearest corner I found a remarkably fat colored woman seated on the front steps of a house, her face buried in her hands and apparently in great suffering, her body being agitated as with irrepressible sobs. Forgetting my own woes in part, I asked her what I could do to relieve her, when, to my astonishment, she suddenly leaped to her feet and began capering about on the sidewalk, indulging the while in hysterical cachinations.

"'Woman,' I said finally, 'pray tell me what is the matter with you, so I may have something done for it if possible.'

"My remark seemed to calm her somewhat, and she sat down on the steps again, still laughing hysterically, while the tears streamed from her eyes. At last she recovered herself to some extent and said:

"'She t'rowed de slops onto you?'

"'She certainly did,' I admitted.

"'Dey was meant for me,' said the woman. 'Oh, golly! I shall bust sure—yah, yah, yah!' Then she began screaming again as before.

"'So you are the other party to the disagreement of which I am the victim?' I responded, not entering into the humor of the thing at all.

"Not getting any further reply from the convulsed heap of senseless mirth on the doorstep, I pursued my way homeward, sneaking around by the back streets and attracting no attention save from two messenger boys engaged in playing top, one of whom pointed at me and remarked: 'Say, Billy, that's the sickest-looking dude I ever see.'

"Billy looked me over while he wound his top and said: 'He's been sleepin' all night in the gutter. Where's a cop?'

"At present I am wondering how my blue plaid suit of clothes will look when it comes home from the cleaner's."

Killing Them Didn't Matter.

From the Boston Journal.

In Dr. Peter's book telling how he fought his way in Africa he narrates a curious story of the killing of two natives by Lieut. Tiedemann not far from Victoria Nyanza. The white expedition had been received with much hospitality by Wachore, an important sultan, who invited Peters and Tiedemann to his audience hall, where, surrounded by his chiefs and women, he received them. To impress his guests with his power he had on hand a large collection of the weapons used by his warriors, including a considerable number of rifles and other guns. Among them was a Martini rifle, which Wachore handed to Peters to examine. Peters, after examining the weapon, turned it over to Tiedemann, who discharged it accidentally. The ball passed through the head of one of the men in attendance, killing him instantly, and struck the throat of a man who was behind him and wounded him so severely that he bled to death in a few minutes.

Peters endeavored to apologize for the fearful accident.

"My friend," he said, "is overwhelmed with grief. He did not know that the gun was loaded and he was not even trying to fire it. I think he is not to blame."

The sultan, much to the surprise of the white men, burst out laughing. "Oh, it is nothing," he said, "they're only slaves. It is no matter whatever. Besides, it was not your friend, but the gun that was to blame. Your friend has done nothing wrong at all."

The women echoed the words of their master. They said it was nothing, and they tried to make merry, although Peters thought their laughter was a little forced. Some men bore the bodies out of the hall. They sprinkled sand over the pools of blood and brought in another bucketful of banana wine, with which the king and his guests regaled themselves after the tragical spectacle. Peters said it was a good deal like the accidental breaking of a vase by a guest in a European drawing room and the host and hostess endeavoring to relieve embarrassment and asserting that the incident was of no consequence.

False Economy
Is practiced by people who buy inferior articles of food because cheaper than standard goods. Infants are entitled to the best food obtainable. It is a fact that the Gail Borden "Eagle" Brand Condensed Milk is the best infant food. Your grocer and druggist keep it.