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Literary Selections.

From Household Words.

THE RAILWAY COMPANION.

I know nothing more charming than the discovery that one has got an agreeable companion at the commencement of a long and fatiguing journey; if he has ear-flaps to his cap and a neat portmanteau made to go under the seat, so much the better, for they mark the traveler who is almost always more worth knowing than the stay-at-home. Before the train has cleared the platform he has made a pleasant observation in a cheery friendly way, and going on to break a lance with us in wit, or to make a pet quotation of our own, he exhibits generally little nuggets on the surface which may promise any amount of gold-field underneath.

On the other hand, if he grumbles at the light, or gives us a surly answer, or sits on one newspaper while he engages himself with another, how the milk of human kindness curdles within us! We say in our haste, all men are bears alike. The greatest one I ever traveled with was on a short journey from London to Brighton, when I was a wicked young cadet at Sandhurst, and in company with two others at the same college. We three had been, of course, late for the train; and, while it was on the move, bundled into the first carriage we laid hold of, and it turned out to be the den of a white bear. He had a white hat and a white great-coat, and growled in a polar manner at our sudden incursion. I was but fifteen, and felt inclined to beg his pardon, but Darall and Goit were older and stiffer-necked.

"Sir," said the former, after a minute or two, "have you any objection to our smoking in this carriage?"

"I'd like to see you at it!" was the grim response.

"Your wish, sir," answered my friend, "is our law." And his cigar was alight in a twinkling.

"Have a weed yourself, sir?" said Goit, generously; but he did not dare look the infuriated animal in the face.

For my part, I had enough to do in the judicious management of my Havana; for although I smoked regularly at that time because it was forbidden, the amusement nearly made me ill. So I said nothing.

Presently Darall produced a pack of cards, and appealed to our companion's sense of duty to induce him to take a hand at whist, "For otherwise," he pathetically concluded, "we shall be positively reduced to play dummy."

"Never mind, young gentlemen—never mind," was the answer; "we shall see when we get to Reigate who has got the laugh on his side."

On approaching the station we prudently threw away our cigars. And not too soon; for the instant we reached the platform, the white bear rushed between us, and putting his head out of the window, called lustily for the guard. "I give!" said he, with immense excitement. "I give these boys in charge, for smoking in my carriage!"

"Gentlemen! what have you to say to this?" said the official.

"Simply," replied Darall, while I shuddered at his presence of mind—"simply, that it was not we who were smoking at all—it was the white gentleman himself—smell him. Is it not so?"

We assented to this monstrous statement with eagerness.

"And, moreover," continued our leader, "he wanted us to play at cards with him for money!"

At this the old gentleman absolutely foamed at the mouth. This gave a color to our next proceeding, which was to tap our foreheads with our forefingers, and to whisper in chorus, "He is mad, we think!" The foe, being overpowered by weight of evidence, and in the state we had described him to be, got straightway into another carriage.

I told Aunt Dorothy these circumstances, and she said we ought all three to have been whipped—perhaps, indeed, it was for my sins on that occasion that I have been so unfortunate in my railway companions since. I have been twice in my life shut up with a stark staring mad-man; one of them particularly stark, inasmuch as he had not a single article of clothing on, except his boots and an enormous cavalry cloak, which he took an early opportunity of dispensing with. There were several other people present however, and he was secured without much resistance. But the other business was a far more serious one. I was seated in a first-class carriage of an express train about to start from Paddington, when, to me, as the plays say,

entered a tall gentleman, with his coat buttoned tightly over his chest in the military style, and apparently padded in front. Directly we began to move he asked in a quick, decisive, and rather impatient style—

"Where are you going to, sir?—where are you going?"

"To Bristol," I replied, quietly.

"Bristol," said he, "was burned to the ground last night—the whole of it burned to ashes!"

"What, sir—nonsense—impossible; I have a considerable property there!"

"I am glad of it," answered the stranger, hissing between his clenched teeth; "it's all burned!"

Then, of course, I knew that he was a madman. He kept watching me eagerly, like an animal in act to spring, but I tried not to look afraid, and made conversation as carelessly as I could, but I dare say it was not very brilliant. In passing Hanwell, for instance, I remarked (forgetting altogether the purpose to which it is devoted), "How well Hanwell looks from the railroad, sir!"

At this he placed his hands upon his knees, stared me straight in the face, and replied very deliberately:

"Ah, you should see how the railways look from Hanwell!"

A cold perspiration broke out all over me as I replied, "Ah, indeed!" and made an abortive attempt to yawn. I confess I never felt sleepy, no more interested in any conversation in my life. He kept quite quiet for a mile or two, only regarding me with a wistful and curious countenance, which gradually changed to an expression of disgust and annoyance.

"Sir," said he, at last, emphatically, like a man who has made up his mind upon the subject, "I don't like your nose! But I have got something here (tapping his breast), the eighth wonder of the world, and we'll cut your nose off and substitute that!"

I said, in order to gain time, that I should like to see this wonder before the operation took place.

"I would not show it to everybody, mind you, but I will to you," he said; and, unbuckling his coat, he took from an inner pocket a small white pig, quite dead, which had been born with five legs. He held it by one of the legs between his finger and thumb, and regarded it with much complacency. "You see it's just the same color as your nose, and ever so much better looking; besides which, the singularity of the thing will be so remarkable; why, sir, you will be followed about the streets by hundreds, and perhaps attract the notice of royalty itself." He stopped a little, as if in admiration of the picture he had thus conjured up; then, with an expression of diabolical malice, he returned the precious treasure to his casket; and, with a tone of bitter sarcasm, concluded his remarks with, "And now you shall not have it, after all!"

We had just rushed past Reading like a cannon-ball, but to me the train seemed moving like a snail; there was no stopping, no chance of a rescue, until we reached Didcot; and I could scarcely hope the madman would abstain from violence for another twenty minutes. In hopes to preclude further talk, I got out a book and pretended to be deeply engaged with it; but, as it turned out, this was a most unfortunate experiment.

"Sir," observed my terrible companion, "I perceive you are addicted to study; it is one of the worst vices I am acquainted with—bad in itself and ensnaring to others;" then, with ferocity, he added, "How dare you read in my presence, sir?"

I apologized, and put the volume by, as he continued, "When the Genius in the Arabian Nights, sealed the fisherman rescued from the vessel sealed with Solomon's seal, was shut in it, he promised riches to whomsoever should release him; but afterwards he promised death. So, sir, was I used to benefit him whom I found ignorant, but now I tear him limb from limb; beware, then, how you answer my questions. Are you acquainted with Shakespeare?"

"Yes, sir," said I, confidently, "I am."

"Do you know Milton thoroughly?"

"Yes, sir, I think I do."

"But are you well up in Boswell's Corsica, sir? tell me that! I don't believe you if you say you are; and if you say you are not, I will break you to fragments!"

Now, thanks to a disposition that had led me into out-of-the-way paths of literature, I did happen to have perused that dreary work, and so I had the great pleasure to tell my tormentor. In order to

try me, however, he harassed me with questions about the book as pertinaciously as any senate-house examiner; and, unless my memory had happened to be of the best, I do not doubt that he would have more or less executed his threat. At last the whistle sounded shrilly our approach to Didcot, and it seemed to me the sweetest music I had ever heard.

"We go to Bath together, I believe," said my companion, breaking off his queries and speaking in the most silvery tones.

"We do, sir, I am delighted to say," I answered.

But in five minutes from that time I was narrating my adventure to some people in another carriage, and my poor friend was in the custody of the Great Western Railway police.

TEMPERANCE STORY.

An intelligent wealthy man, who did not drink in society, nor habitually at home, had a room in his mansion in which, as often as three times a year, he would lock himself up in that room until "the scale" was finished. The appearance of this room at the close of one of these sprints was disgustingly filthy. A friend who knew his habits remonstrated with him, but was told that reform was impossible, so irresistible was his craving for rum at certain times. His friend begged him to try. His two sons, fifteen and seventeen years of age, earnestly pressed the appeal. At last the man consented to try, and drawing from his pocket a key, said to his older son: "Here is the key to the liquor-closet; you will take it and promise me on no condition, and for no violence with which I may threaten you, to give it up when I demand it?"

The boy, knowing how furious his father was on these occasions, declined the trust. The father then asked the younger son, a boy of uncommon nerve, the same question, and he promptly replied, "I will." For a few weeks things went on smoothly, but one day the father came home at an unusual hour. His manner betokened that his appetite was gnawing and craving. He called his younger son and demanded the key to the liquor-closet, but was refused firmly. The refusal maddened him, and seizing some weapon, he sprang at his son. For a moment he stood over him with glaring eyes and insane with rage, but the young hero never quailed. Fixing his firm but tearful eyes on his father, he said: "Father, I promised you that I would not give you that key, no matter what violence you might threaten, and now you may kill me, but I will never give you that key!"

Instantly the weapon dropped from the man's hand, and as he himself expressed it, "the appetite for liquor seemed to abandon me before the noble firmness of my son." He was reclaimed, and never fell. His cure was radical and thorough. And there is many a man with as strong an appetite for rum as this man, but who is not so unfortunate as to have the Maine Law so summarily and firmly administered at the right time. Could this outside help only have been at hand, many thousands of drunkards, once apparently reformed, would not be filling dissonant graves.

AMERICAN AXIOMS BY A FRENCH FLANEUR.—One readily admits that the States might be a passable residence if the French alone had peopled them.

If you are determined on going to America to make a fortune, be sure of returning to France to spend it. It is a long way from Havre to New York. Make your will before starting; you are an excessively lucky man if you return. In this delightful country the climate manages to be insupportable; it is too hot in summer—but in winter it is too cold. Believe the women, distrust the men—fear the children. In the way of flesh the country grows one good thing: the Cincinnati ham.—Our coarsest bread, eaten at home is better than roast beef eaten there. Go a-head: broken arms, legs, and fortunes; but as every body is not killed—All right! go a-head! Nothing is so little like a Frenchman as an American. Look on each railway as a pistol aimed at your head. Railways are so much the fashion, that every American would seem to have a locomotive in his body. God has given the most beautiful country (France) to the best of natives (the French). In two hundred years America will be on a par with European states. That will be the moment to emigrate.

For the Standard.

RUSSIAN MANNERS.

An amusing anecdote illustrative of Russian manners is told by a late traveler in the north of Europe.

An officer in the prime of manhood, of high rank in the Russian army, was appointed by the late Emperor Nicholas to the command of a remote province of the Empire.

On his arrival at the chief town of his government, he was visited by the nobility and great officers of the district, and among the rest by a certain Count, whom he recognized as one of his old classmates at a military school, where they had parted in hostilities on a charge of an insult received by the count, which he had not courage to resent. Of all the visitors this count was the most overwhelming in his civilities, meeting the governor as one whom he had never seen before, he endeavored to give the impression that they had always been strangers to each other. To his new ruler he spoke as if he had no remembrance of his person or name, and played his part so well that the former was almost convinced that the youthful general had escaped his recollection. Knowing, however, the duration of a Russian's resentment, the governor prudently resolved to be upon his guard. Still every thing continued to proceed smoothly, and the smiles and civilities of the count continued to be lavished upon his old enemy, and nothing occurred to awaken suspicion or to cloud their mutual courtesies.

At length the count appointed a day for giving a great fete at his castle.

This castle was situated on a rough and difficult tract of country, protected by mountainous defiles, yet but a few miles distant from the head quarters of the governor. To this castle his Excellency was invited to attend the feast, which was to be adorned with all the splendor and magnificence of the Russian noblesse.

He accepted the invitation, but after he had done so was visited by certain doubts as to the sincerity of his host, notwithstanding the complete oblivion to which a period of twenty years had apparently consigned the resentment of the count.

He took the precaution therefore to order a body of dragoons, twenty of whom should be provided with leather thongs, to follow him privately, and when the clock should strike nine to close around the castle while the officer in command proceeded to report to him wherever he might be. To this officer the orders were strict. No matter when, how, or about what, the governor might be engaged, the officer must be in his presence and ready to receive his commands.

After giving these orders, the governor repaired to the fete. He was received with great politeness and greeted with every demonstration of respect.—The halls were decked with oriental magnificence. Barbaric pearl and gold were literally showered upon the splendid draperies of the ample halls, and the dresses of the ladies glittered with jewelry. Rich music was pouring forth its soul inspiring harmony. Plumes were nodding, bright eyes were gleaming, generous wines were sparkling, everything was in accordance with festivity and joy.

Still the governor observed that of all the guests, whether ladies or noblemen, not one was present who was not connected by blood or by marriage with the lord of the castle. He gave himself up to the fascinations of the scene, however; enjoyed the splendid arrangements; suffered himself to be led from the grand saloon to the library; from the library to the picture halls; from the pictures to the cabinet of genius through the variety of apartments which had been prepared for the gratification of a refined and luxurious taste, until, at length, he observed that of those who had attended him there were only six who remained, all the nearest blood relations of the count. His ease of manner continued, and moved forward with them towards the cabinet of minerals, when, as he was passing through a smaller apartment the doors were suddenly shut and fastened, and himself seized and bound at once, without the slightest notice of the intention. His doubt then became a very unsatisfactory certainty. The count then proclaimed his hatred, reminded him of their ancient quarrel, and proceeded, with the assistance of his kinsmen, to strip his enemy, and to inflict a severe flagellation upon his naked back. After gratifying their malignity with this infliction, the count and his kinsmen directed their guest to return to the dancing hall and display his disgrace to the company by dancing till supper time.

The governor who had not from the first displayed the slightest symptom of suffering, waled with a firm step, and a manner not the least confused to the ball room, and accosting one of the ladies desired the honor of her hand for the dance, the lady only laughed in his face. He tried another and another with the same success. The shrill voice of female derision, and sneers; jests and ridicule, were heard throughout the apartment; "coward and cowlid," and a variety of other like epithets were bandied about with great alacrity. Still the composure of the high bred governor was imperturbable. He had now asked the hand of every lady in the room but one, whom he had purposely omitted till the last, for she was the loveliest of them all, and had a sweet and compassionate expression of countenance, and did not join in the general laugh, and looked as if she could not have the heart to wound the feelings of a slave. To this lady he now advanced and begged that she would honor him so much as to be his partner in the merry ring. She consented and he had just led her to commence the waltz, when, as his features were beginning for the first time to assume an appearance of anxiety, the clock struck nine. He listened a moment—he heard nothing—his features grew darker—he listened again, and the heavy tramp of a dragoon's footsteps greeted his ear. Presently in marched the fierce and whiskered subaltern, taking his way straight through the bevy of ladies and gay noblemen, who shrunk from him in breathless stillness, he proceeded to his master, and making his military salute, awaited his orders.

Then, for the first time, the governor's manner changed entirely. His shout rang loud and free, "Let no one leave the castle, guard every gate. Let twenty dragoons advance with their weapons to this room." Then turning to the lady who had consented to dance with him, he committed her to the charge of an officer, to be led to her carriage and sent home with the greatest respect. For the rest of the company, ladies and gentlemen, they were stripped by the dragoons, and flogged without reserve with the stirrup leathers. After undergoing this discipline, they were compelled to dance till supper time, for the gratification of the governor, who had before been exhorted by them to go through the same exercise for their own particular amusement. After the dance was done, the governor departed, telling the company that he hoped they were satisfied with their entertainment.

THE COLISEUM.

Is not the following passage in a recent letter of Rev. Abel Stevens, written from Rome to the *Zion's Herald*, beautiful?

"Awd by the grandeur of the building, as I entered it by the arched way, I could not but recall the more sublime martyr scenes which its lofty walls had witnessed—the sufferings of men, women, and even little children for our faith, and at a time when that faith was not what it is now here, a heathen ritual, but the original truth as taught by its founders. This recollection became for the moment the predominant association of the place; I observed a rude cross planted in the centre of the arena; there might have been the very spot where Ignatius of Antioch knelt when attacked by the lions; at least hundreds, whose names are equally recorded on high, fled there. I did not resist the spontaneous impulse of my feelings, but hastened to the spot and bowing down upon it, thanked God for their blessed memory and testimony, and prayed that my more secure life might be worthy of the faith which they so dearly vindicated. It was a sublime scene for prayer, and I lingered on my knees, my face hid in my hands, while the history of those early ages of persecution passed like a sublime tragedy before me. I bowed not before an image; there was none on the lofty wooden cross; I would not bow to an even of Christ himself; I bowed only before that invisible 'throne of grace,' beneath which thousands of martyrs had here bowed unto death, while the vision, seen by their faith, became effulgent with glory above their agonies."

NOT WHO, BUT WHAT.—Lady.—And so you are married, eh? Who did you marry?—Forgetful Snob.—Well, I married forty thousand dollars—I forgot her other name.

Young Snobbery (a regularly lady-killer).—How the gals do stare at one's beard! I suppose they think I'm a horriber just come from the Crimea!—Punch.

SCENE IN PATAGONIA.

Patagonia is a country of which less is known than any other upon the Western Continent. Mr. Bourne's late work, therefore, which contains the narrative of a considerable stay and extensive travel in that country, is all the more welcome. To learn that human nature in Patagonia has much in common with human nature elsewhere, it is only necessary to read the passage annexed:—

"One evening, the chief, his four wives, two daughters, an infant grand-daughter, and myself, were scattered about the lodge, enveloped in a smoke of unusual strength and density. While the others sat around as unconcerned as so many pieces of bacon, I lay flat, with my face close to the ground, and my head covered with a piece of guanaco-skin, the only position in which it was possible to gain any relief from the stifling fumigation. While in this attitude, I fancied I heard the tramp of many feet without, and a confused muttering, as if a multitude of Indians were talking together. Presently a hoarse voice sounded in front, evidently aimed at the ears of some one within, to which the chief promptly replied. I caught a few words—enough to satisfy me that I was not the subject of their colloquy, but that there was a lady in the case—and listened curiously, without any of the fright which grew out of the previous negotiations. The conversation grew animated, and the equanimity of his high mightiness the chief was somewhat disturbed. I cast a penetrating glance into the smoke at the female members of our household, to discern, if possible, whether any one of them was specially interested. One look was sufficient: the chief's daughter (who, by the way, was a *quasi* widow, with one hopeful scion springing up by her side,) sat listening to the conversation with anxiety and apprehension visible in every feature. Her mother sat near her, her chin resting upon her hand, with an anxious and thoughtful expression of countenance. The invisible speaker without, it soon appeared, was an unsuccessful suitor of the daughter, and had come with his friends to press his claim. He urged his suit, if not with classic, with *earnest eloquence*, but with success ill proportioned to his efforts. The chief told him he was a poor good-for-nothing fellow, had no horses, and was unfit to be his son-in-law, or any one else's. The outsider was not to be so easily put off; he pushed his suit with fresh energy, affirming that his deficiency of horses was from want of opportunity, not from lack of will or ability to appropriate the first that came within his reach. On the contrary, he claimed to be as ingenious and accomplished a thief as ever swung a lasso or ran off a horse, and a mighty hunter besides, whose wife would never suffer for want of grease. The inexorable chief hereat got considerably excited, told him he was a poor devil, and might be off with himself; he wouldn't talk any more about it. The suppliant, as a last resort, appealed to the fair one herself, begging her to smile on his suit, and assuring her, with marked emphasis, that, if successful in his aspirations, he would give her *plenty of grease*. At this last argument she was unable to resist longer, but entreated her father to sanction their union. But the hard-hearted parent, not at all mollified by this appeal from his decision to an inferior tribunal, broke out in a towering passion, and poured forth a torrent of abuse. The mother here interposed, and besought him not to be angry with the young folks, but to deal more gently and considerately with them. She even hinted that he might have done injustice to the young man. He might turn out a smarter man than he had credit for. He might—who knew?—make a fine chief yet, possess plenty of horses, and prove a highly eligible match for their daughter. The old fellow had been (for him) quite moderate, but this was too much. His rage completely mastered him. He rose up, seized the papoose's cradle, and hurled it violently out of doors, and the other chatties appertaining to his daughter, went after in rapid succession. He then ordered her to follow her goods *instantly*, with which benediction she departed, responding with a smile of satisfaction, doubtless anticipating the promised luxuries of her new home, the vision of which, through the present tempest, fortified her mind against its worst perils. Leaving the lodge, she gathered up her scattered effects, and accompanied by her mother, the bridal party disappeared. The chief sat on his horse-skin couch, his legs crossed partly under him, looking sour enough. Presently the bride and her mother returned, and now began the second scene. The chief no sooner recognized them than a sound—

something between a grunt and a growl, but much nearer the latter than the former, and in a decided *crescendo*—gave warning of a fresh eruption. The rumbling grew more emphatic, and suddenly his fury burst on the head of his wife. Seizing her by the hair, he hurled her violently to the ground, and bent her with his clenched fists till I thought he would break every bone in her body, and reduce her substance to a jelly. Perhaps I was a little hard-hearted, but she had been one of my bitterest enemies, and I had a feeling that if some of her ill-will to me could be beaten out of her, I could be easily resigned to her fate. The drubbing ended, she rose and muttered something he did not like. He replied by a violent blow on the side of her head, that sent her staggering to the further end of the hut. This last argument was decisive, and she kept her huge mouth closed for the night. There was a silent pause for some minutes, and, without another word, we ranged ourselves for repose. I thought the old heathen's conscience troubled him through the night; his sleep was broken, and he appeared very restless. Early the next morning he went to the lodge of the newly-married pair, and had a long chat with them. They thought him rather severe upon them at first; but, after a good deal of diplomacy, a better understanding was brought about. The young people could hardly get over a sense of the indignities they had received; but in the course of the day returned, bag and baggage, to the old chief's tent, and made it their permanent abode."

ANIMALCULÆ.

The recent astonishing discoveries of Ehrenberg, a Prussian naturalist, have given a new aspect to this department of animated nature, even in a geological point of view. He has described seven hundred and twenty-two living species which swarm almost everywhere, even in the fluids of living and healthy animals in countless numbers. Formerly they were thought to be the most simple of all animals in their organization; to be in fact little more than mere particles of matter endowed with vitality; but he has discovered in them mouths, teeth, stomachs, muscles, nerves, glands, eyes, and organs of reproduction. Some of the smallest animalcule are not more than the twenty-four thousandth of an inch in diameter, and the thickness of the skin of their stomachs not more than the fifty-millionth part of an inch. In their mode of reproduction they are viviparous, oviparous, and gemmiparous. An individual of the *Hydatina senta* increased in ten days to one million; on the eleventh day to four millions, and on the twelfth day to sixteen millions. In another case Ehrenberg says that one individual is capable of becoming in four days one hundred and seventy billions! Leuwenhoek calculated that one billion animalcule, such as occur in common water, would not altogether make a mass so large as a grain of sand. Ehrenberg estimates that five hundred millions of them do actually sometimes exist in a single drop of water. In the Alps there is sometimes found a snow of red color; and it has been recently ascertained by M. Shuttleworth that the coloring matter is composed chiefly of infusoria, with some plants of the tribe of *Alge*. And what is most singular is, that when the snow had been melted for a short time, so as to become a little warmer than the freezing point, the animals die, because they can not endure so much heat! A specimen of *meteoric paper* which fell from the sky in Courland in 1786, has been examined by Ehrenberg, and found to consist, like the red snow, of *Conferva* and *Infusoria*. Of the latter he found twenty-nine species. Surprising as these facts are, it will perhaps seem still more incredible that the skeletons of these animals should be found in a fossil state, and actually constitute nearly the whole mass of soils and rocks, several feet in thickness, and extending over areas of many acres. Yet this, too, has been ascertained by the same acute Prussian naturalist.

HEREDITARY DESCENT.—Young Joe-King (of the Parthenon) says he knows a Scotch Lord, whose ancestors have, for centuries past, transmitted down from generation to generation—so, at least, it runs in the family—a beautiful head of red hair; and he thinks any of our legal big-wigs would accept this as a *prima facie* proof of Hair-red-itory Descent!—Punch.

Everything may be mimicked by hypocrisy but hostility and love united. The more rare the more radiant when they meet.