



NEVER DESPAIR.

Who has not heard or read about London bridge, that famous thoroughfare of England's busiest centre of traffic, of its endless stream of humanity passing to and fro in their daily pursuits, of innumerable tales of woe, of lives lost, mispent and forlorn, of tragedies, occurring only to be at once forgotten and followed by more startling crimes, the inevitable result and outcome of everyday life in the English metropolis—the seat of untold wealth and untold misery—that unrolls before us the depths of human nature, only too often in their most revolting form?

It was a dark and foggy evening. The hour when the tired toilers seek the comfort of their fireside, when everybody goes to his home—provided he has a home—has come and gone. Suddenly two pedestrians approaching from opposite directions came to a sudden and rather unpleasant collision on the bridge. One of them, young, and dressed in the height of fashion, had come from the aristocratic regions of the West End, while the other, who had approached from the laboring districts of Southwark was much older and was poorly clad.

"Zounds, sir," exclaimed the younger of the two, "your cranium is not exactly bolstered up with springs, I assure you. Why could you not get out of the way when you saw me approach?"

The other, evidently a laborer, shrugged his shoulders and threw a longing look across the railing to the dark waters of the Thames below.

"Where were you going post haste?" continued the first speaker, noticing the man's dejected attitude.

"There!" came the hoarse answer, pointing down to the river.

"There? Well, my man, our road is the same. Take me with you!"

The poor laborer cast a surprised look at the well-dressed young man.

"You?" he said. "You to go down there? Impossible! What has put such a dreadful thought into your head? You are surely not suffering from want; you cannot possibly know the sorrow and the misery that is the poor man's portion? You look like a rich man, you have youth besides—consequently you are happy and to be envied!"

"Wrong, my friend, altogether wrong. Wealth is not always akin to happiness," responded the young man. "Come, rouse yourself, I can see things also have gone wrong with you; walk with me a short distance and let me explain."

Strange! Here were two persons who had not even known of each other's existence five minutes before, but withal, they found themselves drawn toward one another by that sympathetic flash which so often influences our destinies.

Peaceably and contentedly they walked side by side, while the rich man poured his heart out to his poor companion, telling him with impulsive words that he led anything but a happy life, although possessing everything that usually goes to make life worth living. He was a bachelor who had inherited great wealth from his uncle. He had drained the pleasure cup of all kinds of amusements, had kept servants, horses and carriages; numberless friends had congregated at his splendidly furnished apartments and in his country residences; he had even widely speculated without rhyme or reason in Lombard street, but won in spite of his folly; he had traveled, he had celebrated orgies, he had lived like a sybarite and thrown away his money with both hands and now he was tired of life, satiated and blasé in

spite of his youth. Melancholy, remorse and misanthropy troubled him incessantly, and he could not help repeating to himself that his life had been an utterly useless one. Therefore he had finally come to the deliberate conclusion to end his worthless existence in the waters of the river Thames.

The laborer was dumbfounded. Never in his life had he listened to such a queer tale.

"How incomprehensible!" he exclaimed. "My life tells exactly the opposite story. I am very poor, have an ailing wife and seven children, and, alas, no food for them; thus far I have honestly and tirelessly tried to make the two ends meet—in a manner—by hard work, but a few days ago I lost my place in the factory on account of the dull times. I cannot witness the misery at home any longer; it tears my heart to look at my starving loved ones; and though my poor, suffering wife tries hard to console me and to give me courage, bidding me not to despair, I see no escape. I have no hope left and am resolved to put an end to my miserable existence. May God in His infinite mercy have pity on my family!"

"Poor fellow!" The rich young man's countenance was full of deep felt pity and unbidden tears gathered in his eyes. Such a tale he had never heard, never dreamt of amid the affluence of his surroundings.

"Now I know that there are people in this world who are a great deal more unhappy than I considered myself to be, fool that I was," he reflected.

"But cheer up, man, there is help in a case like yours. Come, lead the way, take me to your house. I guess I can end your troubles, and as far as the—jumping into the Thames is concerned, I think there is no special hurry about it, do you?"

A cab soon brought the two former candidates for self-destruction to the dirty narrow lanes of the workingmen's quarter in Southwark, where it stopped in front of a tumble-down cottage. Poverty and want stared at them from every nook and corner as the master of the house and his young companion entered a small but tidy and scrupulously clean room. A group of children of a pronounced blonde type had hardly recognized their father when they ran up to them and pitifully begged for bread. Her eyes, red and swollen from crying, her body emaciated from want and sickness, the mother painfully tried to rise from her work, as soon as she beheld the aristocratic looking stranger, aided by her 17-year-old daughter Mary.

The young man was shocked when he beheld this scene of what appeared to be unmerited but great misery. But when his sympathetic and astonished gaze full of pity, had fastened itself upon the face and figure of the beautiful blue-eyed, slender blonde girl he gave a start of genuine surprise. Full of a generous impulse and quickly resolved, he grabbed the laborer by the hand, exclaiming:

"Cheer up, I shall be back in an hour," he explained, and left before the family had time to recover from their astonishment over the unexpected visitor.

All the father was able to do in reply to the many questions of his wife and children was to console and cheer them in a half-hearted manner. But he said nothing about his suicidal intentions or about the strange meeting that had prevented their consummation.

Suddenly the door opened once more to admit the man who was uppermost in their thoughts. Behind him appeared two servants carrying baskets filled with choice eatables, which they deposited upon the table and at once withdrew.

The young man walked up to the astonished and speechless laborer, saying in tremulous tones:

"My friend, tonight you have saved my life. Let me offer you and yours a small token of my gratitude. Do me the honor to accept what I brought you, also this sum of money. And

now, cheer up, for you will have no more worries if I can help it."

All shed tears of joy. Again and again they showered blessings and expressions of their overwhelming gratitude upon their noble benefactor; but when Mary approached him to kiss his hand for saving the mother, whose life was fast ebbing away from sheer want and ailment, he drew back, saying:

"My friend! I have more to tell you. My name is John Graham, and, as I have already informed you, I have inherited great wealth. But I have no peaceful home, my life is not a regulated one. When an hour ago I left you I went to the next police station, to find out all I could about you, also to your former employer, and to the clergyman of this district. I have heard nothing but good spoken of you, especially so and in the highest degree, of your daughter Mary, for whom I should like to care exclusively, if you will let me."

These gracious words were followed by silence, unbroken but for the sobbing of Mary's mother, who finally remarked with suppressed tears choking her utterance, that Mary was her sole dependence for the household work, that she alone cared for the little ones when their father was away at his work, and she, the mother, sick in her bed, that Mary had never worked away from home, and was hardly in a fit condition to be employed elsewhere.

"Employment? A position? My dear madam, you have altogether misconstrued my meaning. Nothing is further removed from my thoughts than a desire to see your daughter work for others. I want her for my own, for my wife! I could not pay the debt of gratitude which I owe the family of the man who preserved my life more appropriately than to henceforth keep want and distress from their home. And on the other hand, what better compensation could I ask in return than the permission that would give me the right to do so by making your beautiful daughter my wife, providing she shares my love and is willing to make me the happiest of men!"

Of course there was no objection, and a few weeks later the marriage took place. Two men, tired of life, were fated to become the preservers of two families who henceforth led a happy and useful existence.

The young couple founded an asylum for poor laborers. If you, fair reader, ever go to London, and while "doing" the town should have a chance to visit this institute, over the main entrance to which is the motto—"Never Despair," you will surely have no difficulty to recognize the gray-haired superintendent as one of the heroes of this true tale, the old laborer, and by his side his now fully recuperated wife, trying to do all the good in their power to those in need.—From the French.

Chinatown's Star Attraction.

The star attraction of Chinatown, San Francisco, is no more. Blind Annie is dead. For twelve years the old Chinese woman has held her court in the filthiest hut down the filthiest alley in Chinatown. There every celebrity that has visited California for the last decade has made a pilgrimage to Blind Annie and her cats. For years the old woman has not moved from the hovel. She was said to have been the first Chinese woman to come to California. Whether she was that or not, she was among the first, reaching here in 1851, in the Chinese bloom of fresh fourteen. Woman, white or yellow, were rare in those days, and an enterprising merchant bought Annie for \$2,500 and made her his wife. Toward the end of her life she became quite helpless, and her animals deserted her. Only one yellow dog sat out the death-watch beside his benefactress. The last great visitor she had was Paderowski, who saw her twelve hours before she died, and gave her a five-dollar gold piece.—Harper's Weekly.

His Wife's Refuge.

Mr. Starzestripes—It's all very well for you to want our Mary to marry a British duke, but what would she do in case of war?

Mrs. Starzestripes—What would any wife do in case of war? Go back to her mother, of course.—New York World.

Children's Column



A VOYAGE TO NIDDY-NOD-LAND.

Now a trip for the baby to Niddy-nod-land, Where the sea is on rockers, and e'en the smooth sand

Is made of white flannel as downy and soft As the summery clouds that are floating aloft.

Hi, ho! for our journey so grand, In a billowy cradle to Niddy-nod-land.

We are off; we have started for Niddy-nod-land.

We are blown o'er the ocean by breezes so bland That they scarce left a curl from a voyager's hand.

Yet our craft far away on the waters has sped. Up, down, with a motion so grand, In a billowy cradle for Niddy-nod-land.

O, how long is the journey to Niddy-nod-land? Not so long while the zephyrs our white sails expand.

We are nearing it now; we will land on a rock—

Hush, hush, it's of feathers; we won't feel the shock—

Slow, slow, we have touched the soft strand, And our voyage is ended in Niddy-nod-land.

—New England Homestead.

SUGAR THAT FLOATS.

Here is a pleasant little trick that will mystify the guests at a dinner party, unless they read here how sugar may be made to float upon the surface of tea or coffee. Take a few lumps of sugar and dip them for an instant in a weak solution of collodion, which may be obtained at any store where photographers' supplies are sold.

Expose the lumps to the air for a few days, in order to give the ether in the mixture time to evaporate, and leave behind only a thin collodion skin or envelope. Pass this sugar out, preferably, when iced tea is being served, and, to their surprise, the lumps, after remaining at the bottom of the glass, for a few moments, will rise to the surface, and refuse to sink, even when tapped by the spoon.

The fact is, the apparent sugar is a delusion. The real sugar has been dissolved, and only the thin envelope of the collodion which filled the interstices remain.

The illusion presented by this "ghost" of the sugar lump is perfect, as it floats lightly on the surface. Taken between the thumb and forefinger it collapses into a gelatinous mass.—New York Journal.

A VERY QUEER ANIMAL.

With the exception of the jaguar, the great ant-eater, the ant-bear, or crested ant-bear, whichever you choose to call him, is the most showy quadruped in all South America; nor am I at all sure he is not entitled to first place. In height and bulk a full-grown specimen is about as large as a Newfoundland dog, and is really quite bear-shaped in body and legs. Its tail is long and strong, and bears a tremendous brush of coarse, wiry, brown-black hair, which makes this organ very noticeable. Its head is so small, and its muzzle so fearfully prolonged, that it reminds one of the head and beak of an ibis. Its mouth is a narrow slit across the end of that curious muzzle, its tongue is like a big angle-worm a foot long, and it has no teeth whatever! Its covering is a rough coat of long, coarse, brown hair, most strangely marked by a black band underneath the throat, which on the chest divides into a long, wedge-shaped stripe of black that extends backward and upward across the shoulder.

To me it has always been a puzzle why this creature should possess such a luxuriant coat of hair in so hot a climate. Another point still more open to criticism is his clubbed fore feet. He walks on his claws, and the outer edges of his fore feet, in a most awkward, and even painful way, for which there seems to be no adequate excuse—unless his feet were formed

that way to vex the souls of wicked taxidermists. Put them as you will, they will not look right; but to the living animal their big, strong, hooked claws are very useful in tearing the bark off decayed logs, or ripping open ant-hills for the insertion of that sticky, worm-like tongue. I have often been told by South American hunters that the ant-bear uses his long, bushy tail to sweep up ants with, so that they can be devoured more expeditiously; but I fancy that is only a "yarn."

Even where it is most plentiful, the great ant-eater is a rare animal. Although I have hunted it many days, I never saw but two specimens alive, one of which was a young one in captivity at Ciudad Bolivar, on the Orinoco, and the other was a magnificent large specimen in Forepaugh's menagerie. Owing to their lack of teeth and the peculiarities of their diet, they are difficult to keep alive in captivity. North of Panama this species is found only in Guatemala and Costa Rica and is very rare in both those countries. It lives upon the ground and its worst enemies are the jaguar and puma.—St. Nicholas.

HOW THE CRADLE CAME TO ROCK.

It was an old wooden cradle, unpainted and heavy. It had held two generations of babies. Great-grandmother Donovan's babies had slept under its bright quilt while she spun flax on her little wheel beside it, not even stopping in their work as she now and then gave it a fresh movement with her foot.

Hardly was the last of these thirteen babies able to walk when grandfather Donovan began keeping house, and his ten little ones, one after another, kept the cradle rocking for many years more. Then it seemed to be through with service.

The children grew up and went away. The old house was very quiet. Grandmother Donovan and uncle Robert, who never married, were all who appeared in it. Years after, grandmother went up into the attic one day after some herbs when, happening to look across the room, she saw that little cradle under the eaves was rocking! It would swing rapidly to and fro, for a little time, and then almost stop, when some unseen power would set it going again, just as it used to do when great-grandmother Donovan sat beside it, years ago.

Grandmother always prided herself on her courage, but it was sometime before she grew brave enough to cross the attic and find out what made the cradle rock. Then, what do you think she found? Three of the sweetest, plumpest little kittens you ever saw!

They were having a great frolic, and as they rolled over each other and jumped up on the sides of the cradle, they kept it rocking quite as it used to do.

Tabby had had a sad experience with kittens. They had always mysteriously disappeared in a day or two and she had learned to be very reserved concerning her domestic affairs.

Grandmother knew there were kittens somewhere, and the barn and shed had been carefully searched. She had even looked in sundry boxes and barrels in the attic, but nobody had thought of the cradle, the most natural place in the world for babies.

Perhaps Tabby had some dim idea that all the life which the old cradle held would be sacred, for she came up, rubbing confidently against grandmother's dress, and jumped, purring, in among the kittens, who scrambled after her.

Grandmother's face looked very tender as she looked down on the old, dented cradle, with its faded patchwork quilt.

"Your babies are safe, Tabby," she said.—Youth's Companion.

The Best After All.

Maud—I hear proposing parties are all the style this winter. The girls do the proposing, and the one who proposes the best gets the prize. Have you been to any?

Ethel—No; but I had a proposing party come to me the other evening. How do you like my ring? —Harpers Bazar.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

A man's life is an appendix to his heart.—South.

Joys are our wings, sorrows are our spurs.—Richter.

A lie must be thatched with another or it will soon rain through.

The great secret of life is never to be in the way of others.—Haliburton.

Such is the posie love composes, a stinging nettle mixed with roses.—Brown.

Is not light grander than fire? It is the same element in a state of purity.—Carlyle.

Knowledge of all avails the human kind for all beyond the grave are joys of mind.—Hogg.

Liberality does not exist so much in giving a great deal as in giving seasonably.—La Mieree.

He who always prefaces his tale with laughter is poised between impertinence and folly.—Lavater.

Joy descends gently upon us like the evening dew, and does not patter down like a hailstorm.—Richter.

The game of life looks cheerful when one carries in one's heart the unalienable treasure.—Coleridge.

You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice by fanning his face with a peacock's feather.—Shakespeare.

As the confusion of tongues was a mark of separation, so the being of one language is a mark of union.—Bacon.

We paint love as a child, when he should sit a giant on his clouds, the great disturbing spirit of the world.—Croly.

They pass best over the world who trip over it quickly; for it is but a bog—if we stop we sink.—Queen Elizabeth.

Law is the science in which the greatest powers of the understanding are applied to the greatest number of facts.—Johnson.

The discovery of what is true and the practice of that which is good are the two most important objects of philosophy.—Voltaire.

Ducks Drown an Eagle.

If a writer for the American Field is to be believed, the crow duck is the most extraordinary bird on the Potomac river, cutting up such capers as to make even a naturalist gasp.

"Four years ago," he writes, "while shooting ducks with Mr. Waller (president Cleveland's duck blind builder), I noticed a crowd of three or four thousand crow ducks. After half an hour I noticed an eagle going toward the flock. When he arrived at the proper distance he made a dart but the ducks as if by magic, went under water like a flash, and sent up a volume of water as if a big mine had been exploded. This was done time and time again, and finally the volume of water thrown up was so great that the eagle was drowned. This is a sight seldom seen, which may occur but once in a ducking life of fifty years."

This crow duck is also known as the American coot, mud hen, blue peter, and Fulica Americana by various hunters and alongshore people. Up North these ducks may be seen in creeks and marshy, reed-grown rivers, but South in Florida they resort in enormous numbers to the lakes where bonnets or yellow lilies abound, associating there with lesser scaup ducks. They are shy birds, being much persecuted usually, but in localities where shooting is prohibited, near the Titusville, Fla., railroad pier for instance, they are as tame as sparrows, understanding that they are safe.

The nearest anybody ever came to the drowning eagle story was Frank M. Chapman in his "Birds of Eastern North America," when he says: "When alarmed they patter over the water using their feet as much as their wings. The sound produced is a characteristic one." He does not say whether the water flies or not, but one could imagine that a crow duck just as it turned up to dive could give its scolloped webbed feet a kick up behind, like a vicious mule and so saturating the eagle that it would be drowned. Eagles often catch living fish, out of the water, and of course, get more or less wet in so doing, but perhaps the Potomac river eagles are of a different species than those known to bird books.