The Highland News.

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"LAL" RYDQUIST;

A Story of the Land and Sea.

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE, OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CHAPTER VIII.—CONTINUED.

"What should we have on this little island? We live on kabobo. Do you want to buy any? What is your name?"

"Barnabas B. Wattles, Cap'en of the Fair Maria, lying yonder. Guess you'd like to be aboard her. Well, business first. Let's trade something. Got no turtle?"

"No."

"No beche de mer? No copra?"

"We have nothing."

"Very well, then," said Captain Wattles. "After business, pleasure. Mate, I guess you are tired of this gem of the sea—eh?"

"So tired," replied Rex Armiger, "that if you had not turned up I believe I should have made a raft out of the pandang leaves and tried my luck."

"Then I'm mighty glad we came," said Captain Wattles. "The more so as I have a little bargain to propose before you come aboard my craft."

"Any bargain that's fair."

"I guess this is quite fair and honorable," the Captain went on. "You have been a beach-comber upon this island for nigh upon three years. Three years is a long time. The gell you were in love with has likely got tired of waiting. Your name is wrote off the books; your ship is long since posted; your friends have put on mourning for you——"

"What's the good of so much talk?" interrupted Rex. "I want to be taken off this island. What's your bargain?"

"Fair and easy, lad. Let me have my talk out." Captain Wattles looked at him with a curious expression. "Why, you are as good as dead already."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this. There's one or two men who would like you to be dead. I'm one of those. What's more, I ain't goin', for my part, to be the means of restoring you to life. No, sir. I don't exactly wish you dead, and yet I don't want to see you alive in England."

This was said with great decision.

Rex listened with amazement.

"What harm have I ever done to you, man?" he cried. "You wish me dead?"

"There's no use keeping secrets between us two," continued the strange trader. "Look here, three years ago, before you got command of the Philippine, you were in love with a certain young lady who lives in Rotherhithe."

"Go on. For God's sake, go on."

"That sweet young thing, sir, whom it's a privilege to know and a pride to fall in love with, peaked and pined more than a bit, thinking about you and wondering where you were."

"Poor Lal! dear Lal!"

"Yes, she was real faithful and kind-hearted, that gell. Her friends, and especially her mother, who takes a kind of pleasure in reckoning up the dead men she knows located at the bottom of the briny, gave you up. But she never gave you up. No, never."

"Poor Lal! dear Lal!"

The tears stood in the castaway's eyes as he sat and listened. Behind him the men of the island stood like wild beasts on the alert, waiting for the moment of flight or attack. And also like wild beasts, they were never certain whether to fly or to fight.

"No one like that gell, sir, no one," continued Captain Wattles; "which is all the more reason why other fellows want to cut in."

Rex began to understand.

"Among other fellows is myself, Barnabas B. Wattles. Very good. Now you see why I would rather hear you were dead than alive, and why I'm darned disappointed to meet you here. However, you are on about as desolate a place as I know of, that's one comfort."

The fact brought no comfort to Rex, but quite the reverse.

"Mate, I want to tell you the whole story fair and above board. I will tell you no lies. Therefore, you may trust what I say. And first let me know how you came here, and all about it."

Rex told his story. It was all as Lal had divined from Dick's action. They sighted the island, being then half dead with hunger, and with difficulty managed to paddle themselves ashore. They were seized by the natives and a consultation was held as to whether they should be killed. They were spared.

Life on that island is necessarily simple. The people live entirely on kabobo, which is a sort of rough bread made of the pandang nut. They have no choice, because there is nothing else to live upon. It is the only tree that grows upon this lonely land. Kabobo is said to be wholesome, but it is monotonous.

Rex explained briefly that he had learned to talk with them, and won by slow degrees their confidence; that he had taught them a few simple things, and that he was regarded by them with some sort of affection; that after a year's residence on the island, a ship came in sight, but did not anchor. That a boat put off, manned by an armed crew, who, when the people came down to meet them, half disposed to be friendly, attacked them, killed some and carried off others, among whom was the Malay. This made them extremely suspicious. Since that event nothing had happened; nothing but the slow surge of the wave upon the reef and the sigh of the wind in the pandang trees.

"Now that you have come," Rex concluded, "you who know—her," he added, cheerfully, though his heart was heavy in thinking of the bargain, "you will take me off this island—for her sake."

"For her sake?" echoed Captain Wattles. "Man alive! It is for her sake that I won't do such a silly thing. No, sir. You understand that she thinks you're alive. Very good then. Bein' a faithful gell, she keeps her word with you. Once she knows you are dead, why, there will be a chance for another chap. And who so likely as the man who came all the way out here to discover that interestin' fact? See, pard?"

"Good God!" cried Rex. "Do you mean that you will leave me here and say I am dead?"

"That is exactly what I am coming to, Cap'en Armiger. I take it, sir, that you are a sensible man, and I have been told that you know better than most which way that head of yours is screwed on. You can understand what it is to be in love with that most beautiful creature. What you've got to do is to buy your freedom."

"How am I to buy my freedom?"

"I've thought of this meeting, sir"—this was a happy invention of the moment—"and I considered within myself what would be best. The easiest way out of it, and the way most men would choose, would be to get up a little shindy with these brown devils, there and to take that opportunity of dropping a beast into your vitals. That way, I confess, did seem to me, at first sight, the best. But why kill a man when you needn't? I know it's foolish, but I should like to go back to that young creature without thinking that she'd disapprove if she knew."

Rex sprang to his feet. The man who lay there in the stern of the boat, six feet from the shore, his head upon his hands, calmly explaining why he did not murder him, was going back to England to marry Lal—his Lal. To marry her! He threw up his arms and was speechless with rage and horror.

Behind him the savages stood grouped, waiting for any sign from him to fly or rush upon the strangers with their spears.

The day was perfectly calm, the sea was motionless in the land-locked water, and, in the calm and peace of the hot noonday, the words fell upon his brain like words one hears in a ghastly dream of the night.

"Yes," the man went on, "I want to do what is right, and this is my proposal, Cap'en Armiger. I know you can be trusted, because I've made inquiries. Some Englishmen can lie like Rooshan's, but some can't. You, I am told, are one of that sort who can't. Promise me to drop your own name, not to go back to England for twenty years at least, never to let out that you are Rex Armiger, to stay in these seas, and I'll take you aboard my schooner and land you at Levuka or Honolulu, or wherever you please. Come, you may even go to Australia if you like. As for names, I'll lend you mine. You shall have the name of my brother, Jacob B. Wattles, now in Abraham's bosom. He won't mind, and if he does it don't matter. As for work, there's plenty to get and plenty to do among these islands. There's the labor traffic; there's pearl-fishing; there's trading. You may live among them, marry among them, turn beach-comber for life; you may get to Fiji and run a plantation, Cap'en Armiger, if I were you. I would rather not go back.

"As for this place, now, I don't suppose a man grows to get a yearning for kabobo for a permanence, and on this durned one-horse island there doesn't seem much choice outside the pandang tree. Likewise, those young gentlemen with their toothpicks are not quite the company you were brought up to, I reckon. Whereas, except for the missionaries, who spoil everything, I don't suppose there's better company to be got anywhere in this world than you'll find in this ocean when I land you on an island worth the name. At Honolulu, for instance, there's nobblers and champagne, and—— Wal, I'd rather live there, or in one or two other islands that I know, than anywhere in Europe or the States. And so would you, come to look at things rightly."

Rex still kept silent, pacing on the narrow beach.

"As for being dead, you've been dead for three years, so that can't be any objection. Why, man, I give you life; I resurrect you. Think of that!

"As for being altered, you are so changed that your own mother would not know you again. No fear of any old friends recognizing you. And, so far as a few dollars go to start with, say the word and you shall have them, with a new rig out."

Still Rex made no reply.

"There is my offer, plain and open. I'm sorry for you, Cap'en Armiger, I re'lly am, because she's out an' out the best set-up gell that walks. But two men can't both have her. And I mean to be the man that does—not you. And all is fair in love."

"And if I refuse your offer?"

"Then, Cap'en Armiger, you stay just where you now happen to be. And a most comfortable location. Now, sir, make no error. Since the day that you landed on this island, have you seen ary a sail on the sea? No. Ships don't come here. Even the Germans at Yap know that it's no manner of good coming here. You are out of the reach of hurricanes, so you can't expect so much as a wreck. You are hundreds of miles from any land; you have got no tools to make a raft, and no provisions to put aboard her if you could make one; you are altogether lonely, and hopeless, and destitute. Robinson Crusoe hadn't a more miserable a look-out. As for that young lady, you have no chance, not the least mite of a chance, sir, of seeing her ever again. You have lost her. Why, then, give her another chance, and let me say you are dead. Cap'en, you can write—that's another of my conditions—a last dying will and testimony on a bit of paper, which I will send her. Come, be reasonable."

Rex stood still, staring blankly before him. On the one hand, liberty and life—for to stay upon the island was death; on the other, perhaps a hopeless prison.

Yet—Lal Rydquist! If she mourned him as one dead, would it hurt to let her mourn until she forgot him? He shuddered as he thought of her marrying the cold-blooded villain before him. Perhaps she would never marry anyone, but go in sadness all her days.

I am happy to say that the third course open to him—to give his parole and then to break it—did not occur to him as possible.

He decided according to the nobler way.

"Go without me," he said. And then, without a word of reproach or further entreaty, he left the beach and walked away, and was lost among the palm-trees standing thickly upon the thin and sandy soil.

Captain Wattles gazed after him in admiration.

"There goes," he said, "one of the real old sort. Bully for the British bulldog yet!"

The group of savages stood still, looking on and wondering. They suspected many things: that their white prisoner would run away with the boat; that the crew might fire upon them or try to kidnap them. They also hoped a few things, such as that the white Captain would give them things, fine beads, fine colored stuffs, or rum to get drunk with. Yet nothing happened. Then Captain Wattles, seeing that Rex Armiger had disappeared, bethought him of something. And he began to make signs to the black fellows and to show them from the stern of his boat things wonderful and greatly to be desired, and at the same time he gave certain directions to his crew.

Thereupon the savages, moved with the envy and desire of those things, did with one accord advanse a few yards nearer.

Captain Wattles spread out more things, holding them up in the sun for their admiration, and making signs of invitation.

Then they divided into two groups, of whom one retreated and the other advanced.

Captain Wattles next displayed a couple of most beautiful knives, the blades of which, when he opened them, flashed in the sun in a most surprising manner. And he pointed to two of the islanders, young and stalwart fellows, and invited them by gestures to come into the water and take these knives.

The crew meantime remained perfectly motionless, hands on oars. Only those experienced in rowing might have observed that their oars were well forward ready for the stroke.

The advanced group again separated into two more groups, of which one, consisting of a dozen of the younger men, including the two invited, advanced still nearer, until they were close to the water's edge, and the others retreated further back. All of them, both those behind and those in front, remained watchful and suspicious, like a herd of deer.

Presently the two singled out plunged into the water and swam out to the boat. At first they swam round it, while Captain Wattles continued to smile pleasantly at them and to exhibit the knives. Also the crew dipped their oars without the least noise, and with a half stroke, short and sharp, not moving their bodies, got a little way upon the boat. The swimmers, with their eyes upon the knives, did not seem to notice this maneuver. Nor did they suspect though the oars were dipped again and the boat fairly moving.

For just then they made up their minds that Captain Wattles was a kind and benevolent person, and they swam close to the stern of the vessel and held up their hands for the knives.

It is very well known that the Polynesian natives have long and thick black hair, which they tie up in a knot at the top of their heads.

What, then, was the surprise of these two poor fellows to find their top knots grasped, one by Captain Wattles, and the other by his interpreter, and their own heads held under water till they were half drowned, while the crew gave way and the boat shot out to sea.

There was a wild yell of the natives on shore, and a rush to the water. But the boat was too far out for missiles to reach or shouts to terrify.

"Now, said Captain Wattles, when the half-drowned fellows were hauled up the ship's side, "we didn't exactly want this kind o' cargo, and I had hoped to have stuck to legitimate trade! Wal! this will make it very awkward for the next ship which touches here, and I don't think it will add to Cap'en Armiger's popularity. After all," he added, "I doubt I was a fool not to finish this job and have done with it. Who knows but some blundering ship may find out the place by mistake and pick him up?"

When the Fair Maria returned to Sydney, some months later, the very first thing Captain Wattles did was to put into the post a bulky letter.

Like Captain Borlinder he had written a Narrative. Unlike that worthy's story, this had all the outward appearance of vraisemblance. I would fain enrich this history with it, at length, but forbear. Yet was it a production of remarkable merit, combining so much that was true with so much that was false.

As a basis we may recall the history, briefly touched upon, of the kidnapping by the ship from the Ladrones.

This story put Captain Wattles upon the track of as good a tale of adventure ending with the death of Rex Armiger as was ever told. Some day, perhaps, with changed names, it may see the light as a tale for boys.

The local coloring was excellent, and the writer's knowledge of the natives made every detail absolutely correct. It ended by an appeal, earnest, religious, to Lal's duties as a Christian. No woman, said Captain Barnabas, was allowed to mourn beyond a term; nor was any woman (by the Levitical law) allowed to consider herself as belonging to one man, should that man die. Wherefore, he taught her, it was her bounden duty to accept the past as a thing to be put away and done with.

"We forget," he concluded, "the sorrows of childhood; the hopes and disappointments of early youth are remembered no more by healthy minds. So let it be with the memory of the brave and good man who loved you, doubtless faithfully as you loved him. Do not hide it, or stifle it. Let it die away into a recollection of sadness endured with resignation. I would to Heaven that it had been my lot to touch upon this island, where he lived so long, before the fatal event which carried him off. I would that it had been my privilege to bring him home with me to your arms. I cannot do this now. But when I return to England, and call at Seven Houses, may it be my happiness to administer that consolation which becomes one who bears my christian name."

This was very sweet and beautiful. Indeed, Captain Wattles had a poetical spirit, and would doubtless have written most sweet verses had he turned his attention to that trade.

After the letter was posted, he was sitting in a veranda, his feet up, reading the last San Francisco paper. Suddenly he dropped it, and turned white with some sudden shock.

His friends thought he would faint, and made haste with a nobbler which he drank. Then he sat up in his chair and said, solemnly:

"I have lost the sweetest gell in all the world through the darndest folly! Don't let any man ask me what it was. I had the game in my own hands, and I threw it away. Mates! I sha'n't never—no, never—be able to hold my head up again. A nobbler? Ten nobblers?"

The letter reached England in due course, and, for reasons which will immediately appear, was opened by Captain Zachariasen. He read it aloud right through twice. Then he put it down, and the skin of his face wrinkled itself in a thousand additional crows'-feet, and a ray of profound wisdom beamed from his sagacious eyes, and he said, slowly:

"Mrs. Rydquist, ma'am, I said at first go off that I didn't trust that Yankee any more than the Borlinder lubber. Blame me if they ain't both in the same tale. You and me, ma'am, will live to see!"

"I hope we may, Captain Zachariasen; I hope we may. Last night I lay awake three hours, and I heard voices. We have yet to learn what these voices mean. Winding-sheets in candles I never knew to fail, but voices are uncertain."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—Two men were mending a tank in a Louisville oil refinery. A red-hot bolt was dropped into some turpentine which had been carelessly left in the bottom. The interior of the vessel was instantly aflame. The workmen squeezed into the exit hole together. Neither would give way to the other, and both could not pass through at the same time. The consequence was that they were fatally burned.—*Courier-Journal.*

—"No," he said, "I don't enjoy howling round at night, tearing down signs, making love to burlesque actresses, and making everybody who sees me tired. But I'm a Harvard student, and I don't want to appear eccentric."—*Boston Post.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

—It is stated that two hundred crooks and desperadoes passed through Denver in five days recently on their way from Arizona and New Mexico, from which they had been driven to some new destination.—*Chicago Herald.*

—A British barkentine, lately arrived at St. Johns, reports having passed a large number of floating cattle. Must have been the bulls of the stock market; they are said to have been "all at sea" lately.—*Boston Commercial-Bulletin.*

—A Philadelphia judge decided that Mezzie Reistine was not fit to have the custody of her little girl, and awarded it to its grandmother. But the mother defied the court, fought off the officers, carried the child out of the room, and dashed away in a carriage.

—The Oxford (I. T.) *Enterprise* laments the scarcity of marriageable women in Idaho territory, and has decided to vote a column to aid the bachelors in getting wives. It solicits advertisements from women everywhere who wish to marry, and promises to use its efforts to find them suitable husbands.

—Hortense Kittrell was appointed a clerk in the Nevada Legislature. Henry H. Welch, the chief clerk, at first objected to the presence of a woman in the office. But his objection has been overcome during the present season. Miss Kittrell is now Mrs. Welch.—*St. Louis Globe.*

—Of a party of forty which left Canisteo, N. Y., four years ago, to work on a railroad in Brazil, the last one to return is Charles Forbes, son of a doctor living in Alfred. He describes every discouragement as being encountered, and his experience is like that of most northern workmen who have gone to Brazil. He believes there is only one man of the party left alive in Brazil.

—An Ohio suitor, unable to make the young woman say yes, threatened to shoot himself in her presence. Thereupon she relented. But next day, having considered the matter carefully, she wrote to him that she would not keep the promise made under coercion, and that, while she strongly advised him against suicide, she should feel no responsibility about him. He blew his brains out.—*N. Y. Sun.*

—Bostonians who are bragging that the city possesses the deepest artesian well in the world (2,200 feet) labor under a great delusion. The well on the grounds of the St. Louis Insane Asylum reached a depth of 3,750 feet, the only trouble about it being that the water which flowed from it was salt. Such a disappointment did the latter fact prove that St. Louisians took to beer for consolation, and now they are not sorry that the well was a failure.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

—Tim Poffenbarger was not suspected of any tendency to insanity. He was, in successful business at Gallipolis, Ohio, and a social favorite. Yet he committed suicide because he discovered, as he believed, that he was losing his mental faculties. He wrote: "My mind has become so confused that I am not capable of transacting my business, and my life seems to be a burden to me, and my memory so affected that I scarcely know what I have been doing for several months."—*Detroit Free Press.*

—That mystic organization, the Rosicrucians, under whose auspices last December's charity ball was given, have just contributed another noteworthy charity to the people of St. Louis. The gift this time takes the form of drinking fountains, ten of which are soon to be placed in different localities in the more thickly settled parts of the city. The fountains are simply inscribed: "Gift to the thirsty, from the Rosicrucians."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

—Last week, as a meat merchant from Wilmington was coming up the channel, a baby seal about two feet long followed the boat and set up a piteous cry for help. The little fellow got lost from its mother, and was lonesome and hungry. The boat was stopped, and the little fellow climbed in and nestled down under the legs of the gentleman, who brought him to Wilmington and fed him with milk, of which he is very fond. He is perfectly tame, and is the pet of the town.—*Los Angelos (Cal.) Commercial.*

—More than forty skeletons of Indians have been disturbed by workmen digging up a hill in Oneida Village. Eighteen of the skeletons were in sitting posture, in a row, resting on bricks, the feet of one to the back of the next. Daniel Schoondad, present chief of the Oneidas, says these are warriors killed in battle or the chase. He says he knew there was a burying-place there and that there are others at Wampsville and Oneida Castle. Under an old apple tree four women and two children were found wrapped in blankets.—*Utica (N. Y.) Herald.*

Carries Her Certificate.

We have heard of that sort of heartlessness towards the poor that can stand by their dying beds and in their presence coolly plan their funeral arrangements, but the following is the first instance we remember of a poor patient resenting such treatment by getting well. Says an English paper:

A poor woman lay very ill in her scantily furnished home in Sheffield. The doctor was sent for and came. He at once said that hers was a very grave case, and that she had, as he thought, little chance of recovery, even if she could get the nourishment her illness required.

As he was about to leave, the question was put, "When shall we send for you again, doctor?"

"Well," was the reply, as he looked at the poor woman, and then at her wretched surroundings, "I don't think you need send for me again. She cannot possibly get better, and to save you further trouble, I'll just write you out a certificate for her burial." And he did.

After the doctor departed, the woman—women always were willful—got better rapidly. She has now completely recovered, and goes about carrying her burial certificate with her.—*Youth's Companion.*

A Good Class of Immigrants.

Inquiries at the Bureau of Immigration for Oregon and Washington elicit the fact that about eighty per cent. of the white steerage passengers who arrived within the last month are actual settlers. Each family brings from $500 to $1,000 in cash, and more than half of them bring their household effects. From one-fourth to one-third of the number go to the Umpqua and Rogue River valleys, being induced thither by the immediate prospect of a railroad, while the remainder are about equally divided between eastern Oregon, the Walla Walla valley, the Palouse region and the district lying between the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Columbia River. A considerable number have also gone to the Yakima and neighboring valleys, and a few into the Clearwater country. The immigrants are principally from California, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and Texas—proportions in the order named.—*Portland Oregonian.*

Step-Mothers.

If the pedigree of a prejudice could make it respectable, the popular sentiment against step-mothers might claim respect. Homer had his fling at the women who marry a widower with children; Virgil went out of his way to cast particularly hard and jagged stones at their defenselessness; Ovid accused them of such things that it were better their mothers had not borne them. Where these great ones denounced, lesser voices rallied; and the scandalizing of step-mothers gradually became as classic as many other stupidities and falsities.

Mediæval literature accepted this conventionality of antiquity, precisely as it accepted other representations of women handed down from those mighty ages, without question as to their probability or naturalness. It was enough for reviving intelligence to learn what had been thought, without thinking on its own account. But it is a little hard that the books of modern times, and especially the novels of our own day, which go everywhere, and present to many people the only mental impressions they receive, should echo the jests of Ovid without their wit, or the slanders of Virgil without their brilliancy.

The matrons of antiquity who pointed the moral for detraction were never heard in their own behalf, and may have been neither so fierce nor so frisky as the poets delighted to draw them. Besides, the offending dames of Homer, the half-savage princesses of Thessaly, the slow-witted farmers' wives of Epirus, were hardly of the same humanity with the fine-fibred womanhood of to-day. Shall, therefore, some sensitive soul, doing her best for the happiness of her husband's children, be dismayed by cheap jests, stale two thousand years ago, or by detraction, which but repeats the comments of scandal-mongers dead before the Ionian immigration.

What is there in the contact with tender orphans to harden a woman's heart against them? If she have babies of her own, her love for them, her longing to live for their sakes, teach her what bitterness of parting, what pangs of apprehension, the dead mother must have known, and touch her spirit to unspeakable compassion for the motherless children given to her to rear. If she be childless, then that instinct of maternity which lives in nearly every woman's heart, and must be satisfied, reaches out naturally, almost inevitably, toward her husband's children, for his sake hardly more than for theirs. In families where the children of the first wife are too young to remember her with regret, when the step-mother comes to them it is the rule, and not the exception, that they love their new protector with a love that makes no abatement, and are perhaps happier than they would have been had their own mother lived.

For we maintain that the popular image of the step-mother is so far a phantom, a mere figment of the imagination, that a man's second wife is likely to be a much higher type of woman than his first. Beauty, grace of manner, an idiotic fondness for himself, the most perishable and accidental charms, enchant the boy-lover, and make him the husband. When his girl-wife becomes the mother of his children, folly is not thereby translated into wisdom; and if she be compact of follies, however pretty and well-behaved, her offspring will suffer for that combination. Does anybody doubt that Agnes would have made a far better mother for Dora's baby, had it lived, than that poor, sweet-faced, loving, silly, altogether charming simpleton? And Agnes is the woman whom the Davids, in their thoughtful prime, would choose.

Step-mothers are impatient, unjust, unable to see its conduct from the child's point of view, we are told. Are mothers, then, so uniformly patient, just, full of loving imagination? Their children fret them, bore them, offend against them innocently, and are sharply and unfairly punished constantly. But their love is taken for granted by a censorious world, and very likely a perverse generation praises their "discipline." Against the laws of the step-mother the young offender may trespass seventy times seven times, and if her voice be harsh at the seventy-first infraction, all the child's surviving relatives on the maternal side openly pity him, or with ostentatious forbearance, "with arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake, or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase," aid and comfort the rebel vastly more than by espousal of his cause.

We mean merely to assert that the world is peopled by human beings. Maternity comes by nature, but motherhood is the fruit of grace. It is as likely to be the possession of some maiden aunt, of some childless matron, of some misunderstood step-mother, as of her who has suffered in travail. Children are wearing, and those who have them in keeping are worn. The temper of the race is not flawless, and the list is short of our own acquaintances who are too patient, too tolerant, and too just. But it is unfair, it is monstrous, to condemn a whole class of women to reprobation, and assume their guilt as well, for a kind of offenses which we do not even comment upon when another class of women commits them. The tale runs that the Queen of Theseus compassed the death of her step-son by extremely unpleasant and underhand means. But Medea, on the other hand, killed her own innocent children because their father had offended her, got on comfortably in very high society afterward, and finally received divine honors. Which illustrates, perhaps, the average verdict on the conduct of mothers and step-mothers.

It is said that second wives are jealous of the pale ghost of their predecessors, and visit this jealousy on their children. Women ought eagerly to confute this libel upon their sex. It is often true that older children are jealous of the new mother; but this is usually because they are taught this doubt by those whom they love. Selfish and jealous women will be bad step-mothers, as they will be bad mothers. But the proportion of selfish and jealous women is not inordinate, and the great host of self-denying, helpful and loving step-mothers ought not to suffer vicarious contumely. Their place is not an enviable one. But in that future when the voice of commonsense shall silence the voice of tradition, it is certain that men and women will be ashamed to jeer at one of the most difficult attempts, at one of the most defenceless classes, of women.—*Harper's Bazar.*

—The fashion of wearing jeweled garters, the New York *Sun* says, is spreading rapidly. All jewelers keep them and say the custom is 100 per cent. greater this year than last. The cheapest pair at one jeweler's cost forty-six dollars, and the dearest $1,200, which were made to order. Curiously enough the cheap ones do not sell well.

—Peanuts for Desert.—Shell roasted nuts, remove the skins, heat them until they are crisp in a hot oven, sprinkle them with salt and serve them hot with the dessert. Sherry or madeira wine is usually taken with them.—*N. Y. Times.*

Kentucky Readers.

A few days ago, Mr. Robert Edgar, who lives at Edgar's Ferry, in Butler County, hired a man by the name of Ben Norris to repair a house belonging to him. In doing so it was necessary to take up the floor, and Mr. Norris noticed that at a certain place it was nailed down with special pains and extra secure. When the heavy nails were drawn, and the flooring removed, a mound of dirt was revealed. Mr. Edgar told Norris to carry out the dirt, as it would likely rot the sleepers. In digging down, Mr. Norris discovered that he had struck a hole and went a little further, and to his great astonishment and holy horror discovered that he had run upon a mysterious cemetery. In this hole were the bones of three persons, pronounced by Dr. G. W. Millikin to be those of a man, woman and boy child. Whose bones they are, or who put them there, is a deep mystery that may never be solved, but the people of the community are unanimous in the supposition that some travellers have put up at the house and been foully dealth with and laid under the floor to tell no tales.

The house is fifty or more years old, and has been occupied all the time. Mr. Stephen Bond, now a resident of Caneyville, Ky., owned and lived in the house during the war, and it is remembered by the neighbors that at one time he was digging in and around the house for some money he said he had buried under the house and lost. He dug around in several places, stirred the dirt considerably, but never found the lost treasure he had planted, and supposed somebody had stolen. A man by the name of William Hendricks lived in the house before Bond and before the war. Old man Hiram Childers, who laid the floor when the house was built, is positive there was no mound or even uneveness of the ground when the house was built and is certain the unfortunate victims were hidden away since the house was built, as directly over them the flooring was nailed down with especial care and strength as was developed the other day, and he knows that that part received no extra work when the job was being done. The people of the neighborhood know of no one who is, or was at any time missing, and they conclude that those are travelers, who happened to stay all night and never got out. With the bones was a partially decayed No. four lady's slipper, in which was found a silver five cent piece.

The people of that whole section are very much exercised over their find, and would like to know who the human butcher was, and who the victims were. An investigation is likely to be had.—*Bowling Green Gazette.*

Catching Quail in India.

India is a land of wonders; but among the strange sights few are more utterly ridiculous than that of a party of natives driving quail.

The quail-hunter throws a large white cloth over his head, which is extended in front by means of two sticks held in the hands. Arrayed in this manner, the quail-hunter performs various antics and movements which would lead a looker-on to suppose him insane. There is a method in his madness, however. This remarkable adjustment of the white cloth is supposed to transform the man into a bull or other horned animal. He pretends to paw the earth, tosses his make-believe horns, turns round and round, pretending to scratch himself in true bovine fashion. It is irresistibly comic to watch him, and a little attention generally pleases him to such an extent that he will redouble his efforts and multiply his ridiculous pranks until the spectator is thrown into convulsions of laughter.

There are several distinct varieties of quail in India; they frequent open places near rivers, keeping near the ground when flying, and running rapidly among the grasses. The hunters spread fine nets around two sides of the field, and at the end they place a large cage with one or more decoy birds inside.

The idiotic-looking cow has all his wits about him. He proceeds warily; his keen eye detects the coveys of quail, and sees which way they are running. He is no more like a cow than that respectable animal is like a cucumber, but his ruse succeeds wonderfully. He moves about, tosses his head, switches his ingeniously contrived tail, and so manœuvres that he keeps the running quail away from the unprotected edges of the field. When they get to the verge protected by the net they begin to take alarm. They are probably a little uncertain about the peculiar-looking "old cow" behind them, and running along the net, they see the decoy quail apparently feeding in great security and comfort. The V-shaped mouth of the large basket cage looks invitingly open. The puzzling nets are barring the way, and the cow is gradually closing up behind. As the hunter moves along, he rubs two pieces of dry stick gently up and down his thigh with one hand, thus producing a crackling sound. It is not enough to startle the birds into flight, but alarms them sufficiently to make them get out of the way. One bird, perhaps a little bolder than the others, irritated by the queer crackling sound, now enters the basket, when the others follow like a flock of sheep, and once in, the puzzling shape of the entrance prevents their exit.

Hunters will not unfrequently bag twenty or thirty brace of quail in one field by this absurdly appearing but ingenious method.—*Harper's Young People.*

The Summit of the Earth.

Adolphus Schlagintweit, the immortal though unpronounceable explorer of central Asia, calls the highlands of Pamir "die Welt Zinne"—the roof of the world. On the road from Punjaub to Yarkand four passes have to be crossed that are higher than 17,500 feet, and for a distance of 280 miles the halting ground is not below Pike's Peak. On the eastern plateau of the Beloor-Dagh there is a shelter house near a cliff from whose summit the main chain of the Himalayas with all its view from the highlands of Lassa to the sources of the Indus, while in the west the head-waters of the Oxus and Jaxartes can be traced to the borders of Cabool, where the peaks of the Hindoo-Koosh lift their crests of everlasting snow. In spring the echo of the avalanches resembles the boom of continuous thunder, and in midwinter, when the storm winds sweeps the table land, whirling pillars of snow scud along the ridges, and often seem to dance together like specters in their fluttering winding sheets. Our "Land of the Sky" in the southern Alleghenies must be a mere piazza compared with that top roof of the earth.—*Popular Science Monthly.*

—Longfellow's ear was so keen and his memory of sounds so true that on his visit to France in 1869 he observed how not only the French language, but the manner of pronouncing it, had undergone a marked change since his former visit in 1829.—*Boston Post.*

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

—A recent revival in the William Jewell College at Liberty, Mo., a Baptist institution, resulted in the conversion of twenty-five students.

—The Rev. Dr. Cobb, the new secretary of the American Congregational Union, says that $100,000 must be raised for the work of the Union this year, and calls on all Congregational churches to help him.

—The net profit of the New York Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church was $69,064, and of the Western Concern $25,466, a total of $94,530 during the last year. This large property trust is wisely administered.

—Miss Campbell, an English lady, called the "Queen of Corsica," has built a church at Ajaccio, and rules her chaplain with almost feudal tyranny. If the sermon is too long a large watch is drawn out of her pocket and held over her head until a conclusion is put to the irksome discourse; to the amusement of the congregation and the discomfort of the divine.

—Teachers all over the country who have used the Longfellow Leaflets and Holmes Leaflets, compiled by Miss Josephine E. Hodgdon, will be glad to learn that a series of Whittier Leaflets is now ready. The numerous calls for them which have already been received by the publishers indicate that they will be no less popular than their predecessors.—*Chicago Tribune.*

—Professor Blaikie, the eminent Scotch theologian, wrote after the completion of Moody and Sankey's two months in Edinburgh: "The very infidel has had to own that Moody travels in the footsteps of his Master, and that no other force in the world, least of all the force of scepticism, ever shows such a spirit or engages in such labors of love."

—The following shows the number of pupils enrolled last year in ten of our leading cities, and the cost per capita for their education: New York, 267,944 pupils, $10.35 cost per capita; Chicago, 59,582, $18.57; Boston, 59,543, $23.16; St. Louis, 47,030, $11.66; Cincinnati, 35,750, $21.07; San Francisco, 49,187, $18.45; Pittsburgh, 24,235, $13.76; Buffalo, 18,606, $16.90; Washington, 26,419, $18.17; Newark, N. J., 19,806, $10.49; Detroit, 15,719, $12.36.—*N. Y. Herald.*

—That was a pleasant way in which a newly-settled Methodist minister disarmed the criticism of the people in the congregation to which he had been sent. Instead of getting angry about it or complaining that they had hurt his feelings, he remarked from the pulpit, "I hear that you say I am not much of a preacher; well, I know it; and I know that if I could preach first rate I wouldn't have been sent here to preach to such a lot of ignoramuses as you."—*Chicago Herald.*

—Touching the decline of infant baptism, the *Journal and Messenger* states of New York Presbyterian churches: "In Dr. John Hall's church, with a membership of 1,730, there were but twenty-one babies baptised last year. In Dr. Howard Crosby's, with 1,384 members, there were only seventeen. Dr. Bevan's Brick Church has 1,000 members, but only twenty-three infants were dedicated in baptism. In Dr. Robinson's Memorial Church, 570 members could show only eight. In Mr. Talmage's church, numbering 2,471, only forty-nine infants were baptised. Dr. Cuyler baptised thirty-one infants in a membership of 1,761. Dr. Ludlow, with 378 members, reports six, Dr. Van Dyke, with 571, report none.

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

—A little boy came to his mother recently and said: "I should think that if I was made of dust I would get muddy inside when I drink."

—Strive, endeavor, it profits more
To fight and fail, than on Time's dull shore
To sit an idler ever;
For to him who bares his arm to the strife,
Firm at his post in the battle of life,
The victory falleth—never.

—"What did you say the conductor's name was?" "Glass—Mr. Glass" "O no!" "But it is." "Impossible—it can't be," "And why not, pray?" "Because, sir, Glass is a non-conductor." [Deafening applause from the scientific passengers.]

—Rose McWhortleberry heard her master remark that "Kismet" meant "fate," and this is the reason why she so astonished her mistress by remarking the next day to Belinda, the chamber-maid: "O, Blindy, I can scarcely walk wid the chilblains all over my two kismets."

—A fashion writer of the female sex says: "In dress we are nothing but monkeys." The writer may be an exception; but who ever saw a monkey attired in a corset, a twenty-dollar hat, seventeen-button gloves, a lot of false hair, and several hundred dollars' worth of dry goods.—*Norristown Herald.*

—An Austin teacher was instructing his class in natural history. "To what class of birds does the hawk belong," he asked. "To the birds of prey," was the reply. "And to what class does quail belong?" There was a pause. The teacher repeated the question. "Where does the quail belong?" "On toast," yelled the hungry boy at the foot of the class.—*Texas Siftings.*

—It is strange that no fisherman has come to the front with an explanation of those "miles of dead fish" recently seen floating in the Atlantic ocean. It would only require a couple of pounds more pressure of lying to state that they were a portion of what he caught in one afternoon's fishing, and was obliged to throw them back into the ocean because he had no means of conveying them home.—*Norristown Herald.*

—A man entered a street-car with a half-consumed cigar in his hand and sat down beside a grim-visaged virgin considerably past the period of her youthful bloom. After a time the cigar went out, and the incense arising from the cooling stump made the ancient spinster's nose heave like a Sandy Hook buoy. She called the conductor to her and said sharply: "I thought smoking was prohibited here." "So it is, madame." "It is, eh? Look at this loafer." "I can't help it, madame; his cigar isn't lighted." "Well, then," she shouted, "for heaven's sake make him light it." Women are not always perfectly logical.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

—A negro was standing in a street of Porto Rico, where, as is well-known, slavery still flourishes, when a storm burst over the town, the rain descending in torrents. Sambo hastily pulled off his hat, and did his best to protect it from the downpour. The more terrific it became, the greater efforts did he make to preserve his hat, while his curly locks were saturated like a sponge. "Why don't you put on your hat, Sambo? You would keep your head dry," observed a passer-by. "Not such a fool, sah," replied the nigger, grinning. "Head belong to massa, hat belong to Sambo."