

TO AN ABSENT WIFE.

[From Biloxi, on the Gulf of Mexico, the following beautiful lines were recited by the late George Prentice to the loved one at home.]

This morn—the sea breeze seems to bring
Joy, health and fragrance on its wing—
Bright flowers to me all strange and new,
And glittering in the early dew—
And perfumes rise from many a grove
As incense to the clouds that move
Like spirits o'er you welkin clear—
But I am sad—thou art here.

This noon—a calm, unbroken sleep
Is on the blue waves of the deep—
A soft haze, like a fairy dream,
Is floating o'er both hill and stream—
And many a broad magnolia flower,
Within its shadowy wood and bower,
Is gleaming like a lovely star—
But I am sad—thou art afar.

This eve—on earth the sunset skies
Are painting their own Eden dyes—
The stars come down and trembling, glow
Like blossoms in the waves below,
And, like some moonbeam sprite, the breeze
Seems lingering 'mid the orange trees,
Breathing its music round the spot—
But I am sad—I see thee not.

'Tis midnight—with a soothing spell,
The far tones of the ocean swell,
Soft as the mother's cadence mild,
Low bending o'er her sleeping child—
And on each wandering breeze are heard
The rich notes of the mocking-bird,
In many a wild and wondrous lay,
But I am sad—thou art away.

I sink in dreams—low, sweet and dear,
Thine own dear voice is in my ear;
Around my cheek thy tresses twine,
Thy own loved hand is clasped in mine,
Thy own soft lip to mine is pressed,
Thy head is pillowed on my breast,
Oh! I have all my heart holds dear—
For I am happy—thou art here.

THE AMERICAN'S TALE.

From the London Society.

"It air strange, it air," he was saying as I opened the door on the room where our social little semi-literary society met; "but I could tell you queerer things than that 'ere—almighty queer things. You can't learn everything out of books, sirs, nohow. You see it ain't the men as can string English together and as has good eddications as find themselves in the queer places I've been in. They're mostly rough men, sirs, as can scarce speak aright, far less tell with pen and ink the things they've seen; but if they could they'd make some of your European's harziz with astonishment. They would, sirs, you bet!"

His name was Jefferson Adams, I believe; I know his initials were J. A., for you may see them yet deeply whittled on the right hand upper panel of our smoking-room door. He left us this legacy, and also some artistic patterns done in tobacco juice upon our Turkey carpet; but beyond these reminiscences our American storyteller has vanished from our ken. He came across our ordinary quiet conviviality like some brilliant meteor, and then was lost in outer darkness. That night, however, our Nevada friend was in full swing; and I quietly lit my pipe and dropped into the nearest chair, anxious not to interrupt his story.

"Mind you," he continued, "I ain't got no grudge against your men of science, I likes and respects a chap as can match every beast and plant, from the huckleberry to a grizzly with a jawbreakin' name; but if you wants real interestin' facts, something a bit juicy, you go to your whalers and your frontiersmen, and your scouts and Hudson Bay men, chaps who mostly can scarce sign their names."

There was a pause here, as Mr. Jefferson Adams produced a long cheroot and lit it. We preserved a strict silence in the room, for we had already learned that on the slightest interruption our Yankee drew himself into his shell again. He glanced around with a self-satisfied smile as he remarked our expectant looks, and continued through a halo of smoke:

"Now which of you gentlemen has ever been in Arizona? None, I'll warrant. And of all English and Americans as you can put pen to paper, how many have been in Arizona? Precious few, I calculate. I've been there, sirs, lived there for years; and when I think of what I've seen there, why, I can scarce get myself to believe it now."

"Ah, there's a country! I was one of Walker's filibusters, as they chose to call us; and after we'd busted up, and the chief was shot, some of us made tracks and located down there. A regular English and American colony, we was, with our wives and children, and all complete. I reckon there's some of the old folks there yet, and that they ain't forgotten what I'm agoing to tell you. No I warrant they hain't never on this side of the grave, sirs."

"I was talking about the country, though; and I guess I could astonish you considerably if I spoke of nothing else. To think of such a land being built for a few 'Greasers' and half breeds! It's a mis-using of Providence, that's what I call it."

"Grass as hung over a chap's head as he roared through it, and trees so thick that you couldn't catch a glimpse of blue sky for leagues and leagues, and orchids like umbrellas! Maybe some on you has seen a plant as they calls the 'dy-catcher,' in some parts of the states?"

"Dianca mampicula," murmured Dawson, our scientific man par excellence.

"Ah, 'Die near a municipal,' that's him! You'll see a fly stand on that 'ere plant, and then you'll see the two sides of a leaf snap up together and catch it between them, and grind it up and mash it to bits, for all the world like some great sea squid with its beak; and hours after, if you open the leaf, you'll see the body lying half digested, and in bits. Well, I've seen these fly-traps in Arizona with leaves eight and ten feet long, and thorns or teeth a foot more; why, they could—'but darn it, I'm going too fast!"

"It's about the death of Joe Hawkins I was going to tell you; 'bout as queer a thing, I reckon, as ever you heard tell on. There wasn't anybody in Montana as didn't know of Joe Hawkins—'Alabama Joe,' as he was called there. A regular out-and-outer, 'bout as darned a skunk as ever man clapt eyes on. He was a good chap enough, mind you, as long as you stroked him the right way; but rile him any way, and he went worse nor a wildcat. I've seen him empty his six-shooter into a crowd as chances to jostle him agoing into Simpson's bar where there was a dance on; and he bowled Tom Cooper 'cause he spilt his liquor over his weskit by mistake. No, he didn't stick at murder, Joe didn't; and he weren't a man to be trusted further nor you could see him."

"Now at the time I tell on, when Joe Hawkins was swaggin' about the town, and layin' down the law with his shootin' irons, there was an Englishman there of the name of Scott, Tom Scott, if I recollect aright. This chap Scott was a thorough

Britisher (beggin' the present company's pardon); and yet he didn't freeze much to the British set there, or they didn't freeze much to him. He was a quiet, simple man, Scott was—rather too quiet for a rough set like that; sneakin' they called him, but he weren't that. He kept himself mostly apart, and didn't interfere with nobody so long as he were left alone. Some said as how he'd been kinder ill-treated at home—been a Chartist, or something of that sort, and had to up stick and run; but he never spoke of it himself, an' never complained. Bad luck or good, that chap kept a stiff lip on him."

"This chap Scott was a sort o' butt among the men about Montana, for he was so quiet an' simple like. There was no party either to take up his grievances; for, as I've been saying, the Britishers hardly counted him one of them, and many a rough joke they played on him. He never cut up rough, but was polite to all himself. I think the boys got to think he hadn't much grit in him till he showed 'em their mistake."

"It was in Simpson's bar as the row got up, an' that led to the queer thing I was goin' to tell you of. Alabama Joe and one or two other rowdies were dead on the Britishers in those days, and they spoke their opinions pretty free, though I warned them as there'd be an almighty muss. That particular night Joe was high half drunk, an' he swaggered about the town with his six shooter, lookin' out for a quarrel. Then he turned into the bar where he knew he'd find some of the English as ready for one as was himself. Sure enough, there was half a dozen, lounging about, an' Tom Scott standin' alone before the stove. Joe sat down by the table, and put his revolver and bewie dowie down in front of him."

"Them's my arguments, Jeff," he says to me, "if any white-livered Britisher dares give me the lie. I tried to stop him, sirs; but he warn't a man as you could easily turn, an' he began to speak in a way as no chap could stand. Why, even a 'Greaser' would flare up if you said as much of Greaserland! There was a commotion at the bar, and every man laid his hands on his wepin's but 'ere they could draw we heard a quiet voice from the stove; 'Say you're prayers, Joe Hawkins; for, by heaven, your a dead man!' Joe turned round, and looked like grappin' at his iron; but it warn't no manner of use. Tom Scott was standing up covering him with his Derringer, a smile on his white face, but the very devil shinin' in his eye. 'It aint that the old country has used me over-well,' he says, 'but no man shall speak agin it afore me, and live.' For a second or two I could see his finger tighten around the trigger, an' then he gave a laugh, an' threw the pistol on the floor. 'No,' he says, 'I can't shoot a half drunk man. Take your dirty life, and use it better nor you have done. You've been nearer the grave this night than you will be agin until your time comes. You'd best make tracks now, I guess. Nay, never look black at me, man; I'm not afraid of your shootin' iron. A bully's nigh always a coward.' And he swung contemptuously round, and relit his half-smoked pipe from the stove; while Alabama slunk out o' the bar, with the laughs of the Britishers ringin' in his ears. I saw his face as he passed me, and on it I saw murder, sirs—murder, as plain as ever I seed anything in my life."

"I stayed in the bar after the row, and watched Tom Scott as he shook hands with the men about. It seemed kinder queer to me to see him smilin' and cheerful-like, for I knew Joe's blood-thirsty mind, and that the Englishman had small chance of ever seeing the morning. He lived in an out-of-the-way sort of place, you see, clean off the trail, and had to pass through the Flytrap Gulch to get to it. This here gulch was a marshy, gloomy place, lonely enough during the day, even; for it were always a creepy sort o' thing to see the great eight and ten-foot leaves snapping up if caught touched them; but at night there were never a soul near. Some parts of the marsh, too, were soft and deep, and a body thrown in would be gone by the morning. I could see Alabama Joe crouchin' under the leaves of the great flytrap in the darkest part of the gulch, with a scowl on his face and a revolver in his hand; I could see it, sirs, as plain as my two eyes."

"'Bout midnight Simpson shuts up his bar, so out we had to go. Tom Scott started off for his three-mile walk to a slashing pace. I just dropped him a hint as he passed me, for I kinder liked the chap. 'Keep your derringer loose in your belt, sirs,' I says, 'for you might chance to need it.' He looked around at me with his quiet smile and then I lost sight of him in the gloom. I never thought to see him again. He'd hardly gone afore Simpson comes up to me and says: 'There'll be a nice job in the Flytrap Gulch to-night, Jeff. The boys say that Hawkins started half an honrago to wait for Scott and shoot him on sight. I calculate the coroner'll be wanted to-morrow.'"

"What passed in the gulch that night? It were a question as were asked 'pretty free next morning. A half-breed was in Ferguson's store after daybreak, and he said as he'd chanced to be near the gulch 'bout one in the morning. It warn't easy to get at his story, he seemed so uncommon scared; but he told us, at last, as he'd heard the feeblest screams in the stillness of the night. There weren't no shots, he said, but screams after screams, kinder muffled, like a man with a scrape over his head, an' in moral pain. Abner Brandon and me, and a few more, was in the store at the time; so we mounted and rode out to Scott's house, passing through the gulch on the way. There weren't nothing particular to be seen there—no blood nor marks of a fight, nor nothing; and when we gets up to Scott's house out he comes to meet us as fresh as a lark. 'Hullo, Jeff!' says he, 'no need for the pistols after all. Come in and have a cocktail, boys.' 'Did ye see or hear nothing as ye came home last night?' says I. 'No,' says he; 'all was quiet enough. An owl kinder moaning in the Flytrap Gulch—that was all. Come, jump off and have a glass.'"

"Thank ye," says Abner. So off we gets, and Tom Scott rode into the settlement with us when we went back. An' alfred commotion was on Main street as we rode into it. The 'Merican party seem to have gone clean crazed. Alabama Joe was gone—not a darned particle of him left. Since he went back to the gulch nary eye had seen him. As we got off our horses there was a considerable crowd in front of Simpson's, and some ugly looks at Tom Scott, I can tell you. There was a clinking of pistols, and I saw as Scott Lad his hand in his bosom, too. There weren't a single English face about. 'Stand aside, Jeff Adams,' says Zebb Humphrey, as great a scoundrel as ever lived, 'you hain't got no hand in this game. Say, boys, are we, free Americans, to be murdered by any darned Brit-

isher? It was the quickest thing as ever I seed. There was a rush 'an a crack; Zebb was down, with Scott's ball in his thigh, and Scott himself was on the ground with a dozen men holdin' him. It weren't no use struggling, so he lay quiet. They seemed a bit uncertain what to do with him at first, but the one of Alabama's special chums put them up to it. 'Joe's gone,' he said; 'nothin' an' surer nor that, an' there lies the man as killed him. Some on you knows as Joe went on business to the gulch last night; he never came back. That 'ere Britisher passed through after he'd gone; they'd had a row, screams is heard among the great fly-traps. I say agin he has played poor Joe some o' his sneakin' tricks, an' thrown him into the swamp. It aint no wonder as the body is gone. But air we to stan' by and see English murderin' our own chums? I guess not. Let Judge Lynch try him, that's what I say.' 'Lynch him,' shouted a hundred angry voices, for all the rag tag an' bobtail o' the settlement were around us by this time. 'Here, boys, fetch a rope and swing him up.' Up with him over Simpson's door. 'See here, though,' says another coming forrards 'let's hang him by the great fly trap in the gulch. Let Joe see as he's revenged, if so be as he's buried 'bout there.' There was a shout for this, an' away they went, with Scott tied on his mustang in the middle, and a mounted guard, with cocked revolvers round him for we knew as there was a score or so Britishers about, as didn't seem to recognize Judge Lynch, and was dead on a free fight."

"I went out with them, my heart bleedin' for Scott, though he didn't seem a cent put out, he didn't. He were game to the backbone. Seems kinder queer, sirs, hangin' a man to a flytrap; but our'n were a regular tree, and the leaves like a brace of boats with a hinge between em' and thorns at the bottom."

"We passed down the gulch to the place where the great one grows, and there we seed it. But we seed something worse nor that. Standin' round the tree was some thirty men, Britishers all, an' armed to the teeth. They was waitin' for us evidently, an' had a business-like look about 'em, as if they'd come for something and meant to have it. There was the raw material there for about as warm a scrimmage as ever I seed. As we rode up, a great red-bearded Scotchman—Cameron was his name—stood out afore the rest, his revolver cocked in his hand. 'See here, boys,' he says, 'you have got no call to hurt a hair of that man's head. You aint proved as Joe is dead yet; and if you had, you hain't proved as Scott killed him. Anyhow, it were in self-defense; for you all know as he was lying in wait for Scott, to shoot him on sight; so I say agin, you hain't got no call to hurt that man; and what's more, I've got thirty six-barreled arguments against your doin' it.' 'It's an interestin' pint, and worth arguin' it out,' said the man as was Alabama Joe's special chum. There was a clinkin' of pistols, and a loosenin' of knives, and the two parties began to draw up to one another, an' it looked like a rise in the mortality of Montana. Scott was standing behind with a pistol at his ear if he stirred, lookin' quiet and composed as having no money on the table, when sudden he gives a start an' a shout as rang in our ears like a trumpet. 'Joe!' he cried, 'Joe! Look at him! In the flytrap!' We all turned an' looked where he was pointin'. 'Jerusalem! I think we wont get that prier out of our minds agin. One of the great leaves of the flytrap, that had been shut and touchin' the ground as it lay, was slowly rolling back upon its hinges. There, lying like a child in its cradle, was Alabama Joe in the hollow of the leaf. The great thorns had been slowly driven through his heart as it shut upon him. We could see as he'd tried to cut his way out, for there was a slit in the thick fleshy leaf, an' his bowie was in his hand; but it had smothered him first. He had lain down on it likely to keep the damp off while he were waitin' for Scott, and it had closed on him as you've seen your little hothouse ones close on a fly; an' there he were as we found him, torn and crushed into pulp by the great jagged teeth of the man-eatin' plant. There, sirs, I think you will own as that's a curious story."

"And what became of Scott?" asked Jack Sinclair.

"Why we carried him back on our shoulders, we did, to Simpson's bar, and he stood us liquors round. Made a speech too—a darned fine speech—from the counter. 'Somebody about the British lion an' the 'Merican eagle walkin' arm in arm for ever an' a day. And now, sirs, that yarn was long, and my cheroot's out, so I reckon I'll make tracks afore its later.' and with a 'good night he left the room.'"

Generalities.

Professor Swing's opinion of the great American nation is not one of unmixed admiration. He says apropos of the star route business:—"The nation which pays millions a year for carrying imaginary highways by means of imaginary steamboats and shadow horses and shadow wagons is as yet a nation of mingled children and thives—of which charity hopes the children are in the majority."

A faithful old hostler on his death-bed, in Coburg, Canada, said to those around him that he wished the contents of his trunk divided between the Presbyterian church of the town and the eldest daughter of his employer. The trunk was found to contain about \$4,000, mainly in small coin, just as it was dipped to him by guests at the hotel.

It is ascertained from the Williams College trustees that President Garfield will attend the inauguration of the new president, Franklin Carter, at the coming Williams commencement, and with him secretaries Blain, Lincoln, Hunt, and others. In addition to the addresses of the retiring and incoming presidents, President Porter, of Yale College, will speak, and President Garfield will make an address on behalf of the trustees. So pleased are the alumni with Prof. Carter's election to the presidency that several handsome subscriptions have been made to the college fund.

The real estate "boom" continues. Among other purchasers is Mr. William Walter Phelps, who decided to make some investments when he was recently here. One of the purchases made for him was from Gen. Schenck, consisting of a square fronting on Dupont Circle, containing 36,092 square feet, for which he paid \$64,138 cash. As a proof of the rise in the value of property in this section of the city, it may be stated that this ground was originally bought by Gen. Schenck, in 1871 for less than \$9,000. The second purchase of Mr. Phelps comprises three lots, also fronting on Dupont Circle, for \$47,000 cash. —[Washington letter.]

The excitements occasionally created by interested parties in regard to great estates left unsettled in England and other countries of Europe, and wanting heirs, are in nearly all cases, baseless. The so-called Hyde estate, about which several inquiries have been made, is one of these cases. It is now reported by an official of the Bank of England, which has been supposed to hold over a hundred million dollars of unsettled property belonging to this supposed estate, that after a long and careful search for many years back, he has been unable to find any unclaimed moneys belonging to any person of the name in question, except one unpaid dividend of \$5 still standing in the name of one Hyde, and nothing what-ever to show that this small sum is rightly owned by any living person. And this ends many great expectations based on imagin-

THE CASTLE OF SAN FERNANDO.

The early Franciscan friars were governed by the predominant idea that life is a brief probation, trembling between eternal perdition and everlasting hope. In the early history of the old monasteries in Mexico one finds many mysteries, which, if they were revealed to the gaze of man, would astonish the whole world. The greater portion of the histories of these places will never be written. Most of the abodes of the old friars are now in ruins, or are used for different purposes than they were originally intended to serve. Their records are covered with the rust and decay of centuries, and the greater portion of their manuscripts are scattered all over the world.

Some of these old monks were perfect geniuses, but preferred to allow their talents to be concealed from the vulgar gaze, and their names to sink into obscurity. In some of the monastic abodes one is astonished at the amount of poetical and artistic taste displayed in the decoration of the chapels and rooms of the high dignitaries of the church. While perusing some of the numerous and age-worn manuscripts of the monks, one finds the sweet, devotional poetry of Fray Luis de Leon and the delicate humor of Cervantes displayed by many a poor padre.

The old castle of San Fernando is situated in a picturesque portion of Mexico, surrounded by beautiful hills, valleys and forests of immense magnitude; where the air is warm with the sunshine, yet tempered by the ever soothing influence of the sea; where every kind of tropical fruit grows wild—the orange, the pomegranate, the banana and the palm; where the beautiful passion flower opens and closes at the coming of day and night, and wild beasts and beautiful birds of magnificent plumage sport unmolested by any human hand. It is over 100 miles from any place of abode. It was formerly a monastery of great repute, but it is now occupied by a rich old Spanish exile. It rests in a perfect paradise. Attached to the castle is an art gallery, where many valuable and meritorious works of art adorn the walls. Many of these were painted by the old friars, and formerly adorned the walls of the chapel attached to the monastery.

In the art gallery of San Fernando there are two paintings which attracted my particular attention. I gazed upon them again and again; there was nothing particularly remarkable in their execution, but there was something magnetic about them which drew one's gaze continually. The first was that of a young girl. She was dressed in the extravagant fashion of a past century. Her face was that of an angel, so mild, so chaste, and withal so sad in expression. But indescribable sadness overcast her countenance; her drooping eyes were averted, as in terror from some object. In life she must have been a true ministering angel. Her long, black, flowing hair, her well-formed neck and throat, and a beautifully-shaped hand made one imagine that she was gazing at a Cleopatra or a Venus in disguise, or upon the picture of Mary Queen of Scots in her youth. The attractiveness of the girl made one conjecture all kinds of imaginary secrets as connected with her life.

The other was that of a man, once handsome, but grown old before his time. The face was a thinker's, aristocratic in cut, furrowed deeply with the lineaments of care and long study. A cynical smile hovered about the mouth; the upper lip was covered with a heavy, flowing moustache. The most remarkable feature was his eyes—dark and scathing in expression, they seemed to pierce him on whom they gazed. Spanish cunning was displayed openly on his every feature.

The first moment one gazed upon the portraits, contiguous to each other, apparently of the same age, similar in execution, he would take them to be those of a brother and sister. The eyes of the girl were averted from those of the man.

The history of the originals of these paintings is pathetic as well as sad. More than a century ago the owner of the castle was Senor Joaquin Castlegro, a melancholy and sinister man of iron will; a great physician, whose fame was upon everyone's lips; who was not only noted as a great writer, but who had performed remarkable cures.

He gave up his station of honor in Madrid, and buried himself in this old monastic abode. His days and nights were spent in vain to lay bare the supernatural to the gaze of man. He studied every imaginable science that could aid him in his researches. He traveled far and near, hoarding up and procuring the manuscripts of the Franciscan monks, thinking that in them he would perchance find the magic key to his unsolvable problem. Years had been spent in vain when he fell, as a last resource, upon that weird science, mesmerism. High were his hopes of success. Nothing daunted him in his researches; his every mandate must be obeyed. On his estates there happened to be none open to his mysterious influence. He called to him his pretty, ever-smiling daughter, Sarieta. He succeeded in influencing her but too well.

Higher and higher his aspirations rose, until he imagined he could reach heaven itself. Every day his new experiments proved successful. The brighter his hopes became, the more van became the girl. Slowly but surely her life-blood was being drained away, until she wasted to a mere shadow of her former self. But what cared he? He urged her to collect her strength. Day after day she would succumb to his great will, obeying his commands with meekness. Trance after trance passed, until one day, weaker than ever, she tottered to her chamber.

"But one session more on the morrow," he whispered, "and my ambition is accomplished. Then, girl, you shall have peace; whatever you desire shall be procured for you."

Impatiently he paced his room the next morning. She did not come to his study. A nameless anxiety filled his soul. He paced up and down the room with the fury of a madman. He hurried by the stairs; the door of her room stood ajar. Suddenly the attendants were startled by his wild cries of "Sarieta! Sarieta!" They hurried to her room, where he stood like one in a dream. The girl was not there. She had disappeared no one knew where; no one had seen her leave the castle. The last who saw her was her maid, and then she was writing at her secretarie.

Search was made high and low, but no trace of Sarieta could be found. Finally a note was discovered upon her table addressed to her father. It informed him that she had left the castle with her lover, and when he received her note she would be far out on the ocean, bound for Spain.

Senor Castlegro, upon the receipt of Sarieta's epistle, dumfounded. For days he walked up and down his study, muttering to fancied objects around him, and imploring them to bring him back his beautiful Sarieta. This blow had broken his indomitable will, and he was no longer an imperious and exacting man. He gave up his abode in the wilds of Mexico, and determined to return to Spain and search for his daughter.

He returned to Madrid and was informed of his daughter's marriage to Senor Carlos Vallero. He was an altered, broken-down old man. It was two years since his daughter had left him. He repaired to her mansion, and was informed that she was very ill. He entered her room, where her husband was standing at the foot of the bed, intently gazing at his wife, and looking anxiously at two physicians who were in consultation.

Senor Castlegro's entrance was not noticed. Sarieta opened her eyes and recognized her father. She murmured something, and fell back senseless. He faltered, and buried his face in his hands, for he knew too well what had occurred; for there on the couch lay the body of his fair, angelic Sarieta. Her death was caused by the strain upon her nervous system two years before—by her own father, in his vain attempt to search into the hidden mysteries.

Senor Castlegro after this became a confirmed maniac, and finally died not many years after his daughter's death.

Saratoga incident: She sat at the table of a fashionable watering place, and she wore a crimson satin dress, cut as close to the shoulder as law and shoulders allow, she swept the air with her bare arm, and as her fingers were covered with rings, she seemed to bring down the stars every time. She plunged her fingers into one dish after another and wiped her mouth on the back of her hand. One of her neighbors quietly passed her a napkin and she picked it up as quietly and said: "Here! quick! somebody has lost a handkerchief. I never carry anything as coarse as that."

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