

THE STATION AGENT'S STORY.

They never did much for me till I got a chance, one day. To take a better station, and prepared to come away. I'd worked down there in Watertown for thirteen years, and passed from messenger to agent and was called up here at last.

And when they heard about it they came in with smiles and praise. And told me how it "riched them to hear I'd got the raise." They knew I'd have it, some day; they had seen it all the time.

"For a fellow with such talents as I had was bound to climb."

And they put their heads together and got up a splendid dinner, with the mayor at the head.

And they made a lot of speeches and they praised me to the skies. And I felt my cheeks turn crimson and the dampness in my eyes.

And the ladies that I danced with, when the band began to play.

Said the place would seem so lonesome after I had gone away.

And the wealthy banker's daughter who had seemed so proud before.

Almost confessed she loved me, as we strolled across the floor.

And pretty Janet Flemming, who had let me understand.

That she felt herself above me, trembled when I held her hand.

Trembled, sighed, and, looking at me, said "It'll be so very stupid here without you, don't you know?"

I had never, till that evening, guessed how well they liked me there.

I had worked and hoped and waited and they hadn't noticed me.

And, oh, what a world of gladness had been mine, if I had known.

But they let me wait and worry and keep toiling on alone.

How I might have held my head up if I only could have guessed.

Had I but known they thought that I was worthy of the best.

The wait had been less dreary and my work had been as play.

But they kept their feelings hidden till I had to come away.

Yes, it's just the same old story, people somehow never know.

What a man is worth, or care to, till it comes his turn to go.

—perhaps it's best they shouldn't, for begin to flatter men—

Give them all the praise they earn—and there's no living with them then—

Still, I wish their celebration might have been arranged before.

They found out that I was going and would wander back no more.

—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Times-Herald.

A Pleasure Voyage

By Lynn Roby Meekins.

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A FEW minutes before the steamship Pontic left San Francisco a young woman, followed by a porter carrying two satchels, hurried up the gang-plank. She proceeded at once to the purser's office and said in an anxious but business-like tone:

"You got my telegram—Miss Percy Hartwell, of Denver?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Then you have a stateroom for me?"

"Yes," he answered again, "but you know this ship is making a round trip to Honolulu and does not go to Japan?"

"That will be all right," she said, as she paid her fare. By the time the gang-plank was hauled in and the ship had cast off she was safely quartered in her stateroom.

The indescribable journey through the Golden Gate, with all the glorious play of color and contrast and scene, seemed to have no attraction for her. Not until the ship with the happy crowd of travelers was well out to sea did she make her appearance on deck. She was of medium height, well built and perfectly dressed. Even the dust and weariness of a long railroad ride had not dulled the beauty of her blue eyes nor paled the glow of her fine complexion.

It takes several days to find out that the captain of a ship is not an information bureau, and after that sensible people leave him to his uncommunicative ways.

Miss Percy Hartwell began where the others left off. She did not ask Capt. Whelton questions, in some way which made the others jealous she compelled him to seek her. In sunshine and in storm she was equally in evidence, and after awhile the grizzled old captain began to admire her seaworthy qualities. She was cheerful, she was interesting, and she was full of vigor and common sense. Like every good diplomatist, she did not force the point until she reached it, and then with a smile, which would have won the confidence of any man who had a spark of feeling left, she said in a calm voice that had in it an undertone of pleading which even a steamship captain could feel:

"Captain, I want to be perfectly frank with you. I understand, of course, that this is an excursion to Hawaii and return. Now, I do not like excursions at all, and a few days ago I had no more idea of coming on this trip than of going up in a balloon. My reason in coming was the hope that you might overtake the transport David, which sailed 24 hours ahead of you. There is some one on that ship that I must see and I thought there was a possibility of overtaking the vessel before we reached Honolulu. Now, I want to ask you frankly if you think it can be done? She is slower than

you are."

The captain looked at her with his weather eye opened wider than usual, and she continued:

"Do not give me one of your excursion replies, but think over it and figure it out."

"Well, well, well!" he exclaimed, but before he could answer a call took him away.

Miss Percy Hartwell's next efforts were exerted upon the chief engineer, whom she managed to meet, and whose engine room she visited, distributing well balanced praise that pleased the old Scotman mightily. The result was:

"In the course of 48 hours she had these two worthies of the ship calculating for her benefit, and when she finally drew from them the points that they might overtake the David some hours before they reached Honolulu, she expressed her satisfaction, and then the captain let her into an official confidence."

"You must not mention it," he said, "but we have important dispatches from the government which we must deliver to the David if possible."

Then Miss Percy Hartwell did a very surprising thing. She jumped up, clasped her hands, and exclaimed:

"Hurrah!"

The voyage went on pleasantly and swiftly and Miss Hartwell laughed and joked with the captain and the chief engineer, urging them to push the ship a little faster.

Finally there came a fine gray morning, when there was a blur on the horizon in front, and Miss Hartwell cared for neither breakfast nor luncheon. While the chase was going on the blur was growing into the distinctness of a great steel hull freighted with human beings.

It was afternoon when the ships came within hailing distance. Just before signaling the captain approached Miss Hartwell and asked:

"What is his name and what do you want me to do?"

"Lieut. Edward Ledman," she replied, "and I want you to either bring him over to me or to send me over to him," and the signaling began.

"Government dispatches for the David, and, if you please, send Lieut. Edward Ledman."

Soon a boat put out from the other ship and the passengers crowded over to watch its coming. The sailors pulled with steady stroke and the little craft rose and fell with the billows, while the hands of Miss Percy Hartwell clutched the railing as if human life were at stake.

There upon the broad wastes of the Pacific the great mass of machinery paused. The boat circled like a frightened bird, but finally the rope was caught and one of the sailors ran up the ladder as easily as if everything were smooth and quiet. The tall young man in the lieutenant's uniform did not do as well, but his nerves were steady, even if his legs wobbled. The passengers were inclined to laugh at his lack of skill, but that did not deter him. He reached the deck and asked the captain quickly why he was summoned.

In the meanwhile Miss Percy Hartwell had retired to the further side of the ship. The captain directed one of the stewards to conduct the officer to Miss Hartwell.

"You have only five minutes, sir," was his warning, "and I advise you to be as expeditious as possible."

There were three minutes of grace, but at the end of that time the lieutenant returned radiant.

"I happen to know," said the captain, "that the dispatches are for your ship to proceed with all haste to Manila and if the weather had been stormy I should have signaled to that effect, so now it is not right for me to detain you even for a minute, and I wish you good-by and God speed."

Lieut. Ledman thanked him and there was a sudden rush in which the arms of the officer were around Miss Hartwell, followed by rapid kisses, which the crowd would have applauded if they dared. Down the ladder again he went, and once more the little boat sea-sawed through the waves. There were many kisses thrown and the soldier's cap was raised until his arm must have approached paralysis.

Then after the farewells had been blown by the sirens of the ships, Miss Percy Hartwell for the first time showed indications of weakness. The dear old spinster who sat near her at the table approached to offer her assistance, and she could not help calling attention to a ring on the third finger of the young lady's left hand!

This brought Miss Percy Hartwell very much to her senses and she darted over for her stateroom. The next day in honest gratitude she told the captain all about it. The lieutenant was with his regiment in San Francisco and was ordered to sail before he expected. He did not have time to carry out his programme of returning and placing the ring upon her finger, but did the best he could to send it by mail.

"That did not suit me at all," said Miss Percy Hartwell, "and I was determined that he should put it on himself, and that is why I came."

She does not remember much about Hawaii or Honolulu, or any of the scenes in the mid-Pacific Islands, but when she is asked if she enjoyed her

pleasure trip her reply is:

"Pleasure? You mean bliss!" And that is all there is about it until Lieut. Edward Ledman gets back from the Philippines.

Oldest Tree in the World.

The town of Kos, the capital of the small Turkish island of that name lying off the coast of Asia Minor, possesses the oldest tree in the world. Under its shades Hippocrates inculcated his disciples in his methods and views concerning the healing of 2,000 years ago. Tradition carries the age of the tree back to the time of Aesculapius (of whom Hippocrates was a lineal descendant), which would add some 400 years to its age.—Chicago Chronicle.

Breaking Himself of a Habit.

"Yes," he said, "I'm gradually breaking myself of the smoking habit. I have given up cigars and taken to the pipe now."

"But you smoke the pipe practically continuously from morning to night," she asserted.

"True," he admitted, "but you must remember that the necessity of filling a pipe makes the intermissions between smokes a little longer."—Chicago Post.

NEW INVASION OF INDIA.

American Cigarettes Are Carrying All Before Them in the Orient.

The idea that the native Indian chews all but his native tobacco, which he takes mostly in the form of cheroots, receives a hard shock from the newly issued official Review of the Trade of India. It appears that in 1898-99 the imports of manufactured tobacco, especially in the shape of cigarettes, underwent much expansion.

It is no longer true that the consumption of imported tobacco is practically confined to the Anglo-Indian population. Cigarettes made in America are being extensively imported now with special reference to the requirements of the native smoker, says the London Mail. They are greatly in evidence in and about Calcutta and other large cities, where they are beginning to supersede the unclean and unsavory compounds smoked in native apparatus.

Imported cottoms have largely superseded the production of the native handloom; imported mineral oil and dyes have superseded the inferior articles produced in the country, to the great advantage of the consumer; imported sugar is also gradually beginning to thrust back the inferior and dirty sugar hitherto offered to the Indian consumer; and now it seems that Indian tobacco is to recoil before the invasion of foreign tobacco made up in neatly packed cigarettes.

Another turn of the wheel, and when the people have become accustomed to the better article the capitalist will arise and make it on the spot of Indian tobacco, to the advantage of both producer and consumer, as has been done with cotton goods and will be done with sugar.

THERE WAS A MISTAKE.

Case of Genuine Honesty That Took an Incredible Scoffer Off His Feet.

"I think," he began, as he halted a pedestrian on a back bay street in Boston, "I think I made a mistake with the cabman who drove me to the art gallery. I am quite sure I gave him a ten dollar bill, but he must have mistaken it for a two dollar bill."

"And you hope to find him again?" asked the man, who was a stranger in the city, relates an eastern exchange.

"Why, yes, I have hopes."

"Well, you are about as green as they make 'em. That cabman deliberately swindled you out of many dollars."

"I can't hardly believe it. He looked so honest and truthful that I—"

"That you ought to have asked him to hold your watch and the rest of your money! My dear old Josh from the cornfields, let me say—"

At that minute a cab rattled up, and the driver dismounted and said:

"See here, old man, there is a mistake. You probably meant to give me a two dollar bill, and I thought it was one when I gave you one dollar change."

"But I think it was a ten, my friend."

"No, it was a twenty, and I have been driving about for half an hour to find you and restore the money. Here it is."

"And what was it you were goin' to say to your dear old Josh from the cornfields?" asked the old man, as he turned to the stranger.

But the stranger was there no longer. He was flying for a subway car as if running for his life.

A CLEVER CHINESE.

He Draws a Keen Comparison of His Religion and Other People's.

"One of the most brilliant men of my acquaintance is a Chinaman," said John B. Galore, of New York, to a Washington Post reporter. "He has a tea house up in our metropolis, and he is a scholar as well as importer of the leaf. We were talking about the Chinese imbroglio several days ago, and conversation

drifted from Bixers and the taking of Peking to the teachings of Confucius. He called attention to the fact that missionaries were trying to Christianize native Chinese who cling to a religion which has stood the test 6,000 years, and had nearly 300,000,000 followers, while the Christian religion is scarcely 2,000 years old with many followers of divided belief.

"You Christian believers remind me," he explained, "of the Chinaman who stood on the river shore and watched the moon rise over the hill. A ray of sublime light came to him. It was beautiful. His friends were stationed at other places and he called to them to come quick and behold his own beautiful ray of light. They replied that they also followed beautiful rays of light to the same moon. From whatever position they looked they caught a ray equally as beautiful. That's the way with religion, and especially yours. You are looking at the light of goodness, emanating from the Divine source, and each thinks he has a monopoly, like the lone Chinaman with his one ray of light."

Women Rulers.

Considerably more than half the human race is ruled by women. Two women—the empress dowager of China and the queen of England—alone govern about half the entire population of the world. The third in importance is young Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, whose home land numbers less than 5,000,000 souls, but whose colonies have 30,000,000. Spain is ruled by a woman, Queen Regent Christina, in the minority of her son. It is expected that the queen mother Margherita will have great influence over her son's kingdom, but her case is not needed to establish the preponderance of woman-ruled races.

NATURE KIND IN CALIFORNIA

A Country Where the Farmer Is Not Subjected to the Rigors of Severe Weather.

The New England farmer must fortify himself in his stronghold against the seasons. He must be ready to adapt himself to a year that permits him to prosper only upon decidedly hard terms. But the Californian in the country has, during the drought, more leisure, unless, indeed, his ambition for wealth too much engrosses him, says the International Monthly. His horses are plenty and cheap. His fruit crops thrive easily. He is able to supply his table with fewer purchases with less commercial independence. His position is, therefore less that of the knight in his castle and more that of the free dweller in the summer cottage, who is, indeed, not at leisure, but can easily determine how he shall be busy. It is of little importance to him who his next neighbor is. At pleasure he can ride or drive to find his friends; can choose, like the southern planter of former days, his own range of hospitality; can devote himself, if a man of cultivation, to reading during a good many hours at his own choice, or, if a man of sport, can find during a great part of the year easy opportunities for hunting or for camping both by himself and for the young people of his family.

In the dry season he knows beforehand what engagements can be made without regard to the state of the weather, since the state of the weather is predetermined.

OSTRICH PLUMES SCARCE.

There is a Great Decrease in the Supply Caused by the South African War.

The London papers note that the supply of ostrich plumes in that city, the center of the trade, has been greatly curtailed by the South African war. It is said that there will be a deficiency of nearly \$270,000 worth of feathers at the next sale in Mincing lane. To these sales, which take place six times a year, buyers come from every part of the continent, and even from America. Over \$4,000,000 worth of feathers are sold every year, making an average of \$675,000 at each sale. Since the capture of the Khartoum there has been a steady supply of ostrich feathers from Barbary and, though the South African feathers still command the higher price, their supremacy is threatened by the Barbary feathers. At Mincing lane the cost of the feathers ranges from \$7.50 to \$75 or \$80 per pound weight. The best wing feathers give about 110 to 120 to the pound, and at the highest price this works out at less than 75 cents each. As many of the white feathers scarcely need cleaning, and as dyeing and curling are very expensive, either the middleman or the milliner must reap handsome profits from the fashionable weakness for these beautiful feathers. The smaller feathers from the tail and body of the bird are used for boas.

We Spring from Mud.

A good deal of pleasure appears to have been elicited by the proofs which a German professor has made public to show that we are not descended from apes, says London Truth. It would seem that the apes branched off from the direct line of descent about the time that we did, and that they are, consequently, our cousins a good many

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times removed and not our remote grandfathers. Personally it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether I descend from an ape or whether the ape is only my cousin. During the period that covers the life of a planet, or, I suppose, of a star, there is a comparatively brief period when the heat and the humidity produce vegetation, and the outcome of vegetation is animal life. If, indeed, there is any clear line of demarcation between animal and vegetable life. We and the apes alike descend from protoplasmic mud, one of the most recent discoveries being that all molecules are a self-contained electric battery.

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