

DYING.

Passing out of the shadow
Into a purer light,
Stopping behind the curtain,
Getting a clearer sight,
Laying aside the burden,
This weary mortal coil,
Done with the world's vexations,
Done with its tears and toil,
Tired of all earth's playthings,
Heartsick and ready to sleep,
Ready to bid our friends farewell,
Wondering why they weep,
Passing out of the shadow,
Into eternal day—
Why do we call it dying,
This sweet going away?

THE BEECH TREE.

There stood in the forest an old beech tree. Her top was shattered by lightning, her sides were hollow, and pieces of fungus grew on her bark. She was the oldest of a numerous family, but she had seen her children, as soon as they had grown up, fall under the woodman's ax, and only one daughter remained to her. This daughter was a young beech tree, with smooth bark and heaven aspiring crest and only 80 years old. That is the best year for a forest tree.

The old tree still thrust out her twigs and leaves in the spring, but she felt that her life was drawing to a close, for it cost her great suffering to hold herself upright. And because she knew that she must die she felt her love increase for her beautiful daughter.

Spring was approaching. The branches were still covered with the glittering frost, but the roots began to uncurl, and the warm wind melted the snow. The rivers and brooks were swelling with melted ice. In the meadows the silvery catkins burst from their wrappings, and the snowdrops peeped timidly up through the white carpet of the forest ground.

The old tree spoke to the young: "Tonight comes the violent thaw wind. It will throw me down upon my bed of leaves that I have scattered in the course of time, and I shall go back into the bosom of the mother from whom I came. Yet before I go home I will bequeath to you a gift that the gentle lord of the forest bestowed upon me when long ago he stopped to rest under my branches. You shall understand men's words and deeds and share alike in their joys and sorrows. That is the greatest happiness that can fall to our lot, but be prepared to behold more sorrow than joy." So spoke the old tree and blessed her daughter.

In the night the thaw wind came from the west. It buried ships in the waves of the sea; it rolled great masses of snow from the mountains that destroyed the homes of men in their progress; it roared through the forest, and everything that was old and weak perished. But the strong trees resisted it. It struck the old beech tree to the earth and shook her strong daughter as she wisely bent her head before the blast, and the great wind swept on.

Three days the daughter wept sparkling dew for her mother; then the sun came out and dried her tears. Then began everywhere such stir and commotion that the beech tree had no time to grieve. Her buds swelled and burst and one morning a hundred thousand trembling, tender green leaves sprang into the sunshine. That was joy! Golden yellow primroses climbed from the ground. They pushed their silken leaves out into the broad sunlight. Red and blue blossoms grew up around the primroses, and the sweet woodruff uncurled its delicate whirled leaves. That was life.

And in the midst of all this bloom and fragrance the young beech tree stood like a queen. A finch built her nest in her branches and a redheaded woodpecker paid her a visit. Once cuckoo came and once a distinguished squirrel with his bushy tail over his head ran up and down to see if he might not find an acorn. But men she had not yet seen this year, and they would have been the most welcome guests of all, since she possessed the power to understand their words and deeds. After all, one morning came a slender young girl with her long brown braids, who walked through the woods straight to the tree. However, her visit did not seem to be for the beech alone. She glanced at the decaying trees on the ground and said, "Here is the spot." Then she sat down her basket filled with May flowers and leaned back against the beech tree without a glance at its green loveliness.

The tree held her breath to hear what the maiden would say, but the pretty one was silent. Presently from the opposite side appeared a strong young man. He wore a little round hat with a curling feather like a huntsman. He crept up cautiously—so cautiously that hardly a leaf rustled under his feet. But softly as he stepped the quick ear of the maiden perceived his coming. She turned her head toward him, and the tree thought, "Now she will fly." But the girl did not fly. Instead she sprang toward the youth and threw both arms around his brown neck. "My Hans!" "My Eva!" they cried together. Then they kissed each other passionately, called each other pet names, embraced again, and the beech tree found it all very tedious.

Later they sat under the tree and spoke of their love. It was an old story they told, but it was all new to the beech tree, and she listened like a child

to a fairy tale. It was a wonderful surprise to her. The youth arose from the ground, drew out his knife and began to carve in the bark of the tree. This caused the beech great pain, but she held as still as a wall.

"What is that to be?" asked the maiden.

"A heart with your name and mine," answered Hans as he continued to carve.

When the work was finished, they both looked at it, well pleased, and the tree was as happy as if a king had hung a golden chain upon her.

"Truly, men are splendid people," thought she.

Now the hunter began to sing. The tree had listened many times to the song of the lark and thrush, but she heard now for the first time something very different from bird songs.

"Listen, Hans," said the girl when the hunter paused in his song. "Your song reminds me of something. I know—people say—that in the autumn you go secretly into the woods for game. Let the poaching go. The forester is your enemy. You know why, and if he should meet you poaching in the woods, then—heavens! my Hans! if you should be brought to me with a bullet through your breast."

The young man bent over the girl, who leaned caressingly on his shoulder and kissed her lips.

"People talk too much. Don't believe everything they say, sweetheart." And putting his arm around her they went singing through the forest.

When the couple disappeared among the trees, a man in hunter's dress crept from the bushes. He carried his gun on his back and a knife in his belt. His face was white and distorted. He went up to the beech tree and beheld the heart that Hans had carved. He laughed wildly and drew out his knife to destroy the writing, then, changing his mind, he thrust the blade again in its sheath. Shaking his fist threateningly in the direction where the couple had disappeared, he muttered, grinding his teeth, "If I meet you, you poacher, only once on forbidden ground, you will have heard the cuckoo sing for the last time." With these words he went into the woods.

And the tree shook her head sadly. The beech tree got many a sight of the faces of the children of men in the course of the summer—the poor women gathering leaves or dry bark, the berry pickers, foresters and pilgrims. But the most cherished amid the guests who gathered under her leafy roof were the youth and brown haired maid. They made weekly visits to her, spoke of their love, embraced each other, and day by day the beech tree came to love them more.

One morning before sunrise, when the mountains were just casting off their gray mist caps, Hans came alone. He carried a gun on his shoulder and stepped as lightly through the underbrush as if he would take his sweetheart by surprise. This time his coming had nothing to do with lovely Eva—but the stag comes this way to drink!

At the foot of the tree the hunter paused and stood as motionless as the beech herself. The cool morning wind blew, and the mist disappeared in heavy clouds. The gay birds fluttered and sang about the stream. The underbrush rustled. Hans raised his gun. A shot rang out on the clear air. Hans dropped his gun, sprang convulsively into the air and fell to the ground. A man strode hastily from the thicket with a smoking gun in his left hand. The beech tree knew him well. The huntsman bent over the murdered man. "It is all over with him," he said, and taking his gun he vanished into the bushes.

The bright sun rose and shone upon a still form with set white face. Sorrowfully the tree bent over and wept bitter tears, and the little robins flew up and covered the dead face and staring eyes with leaves and twigs. In the afternoon some woodcutters came that way and found the body.

"He has been shot while poaching," they said, and taking him gently up they bore him to the distant valley. An old man lingered by the tree. He drew his knife and carved a cross over the heart that Hans had made. Then he took off his hat and breathed a prayer. The leaves of the green crest rustled, for the tree prayed, too, in her own way.

For many summers on the anniversary of the death of the murdered man, the maiden came to the seat, knelt down and wept and prayed, and every time she was paler, more fragile. One day she did not come, and the tree murmured, "She is dead!" and so it was.

Years passed. The beech had become a mighty tree. Her bark was covered with brown moss. The wild vines clustered about her trunk, and heart and cross were both nearly covered. A man came one day and made a third mark on the bark, and the tree knew her time had come. She bore the sign of her destruction—she must soon fall. Farewell, thou green and sunny forest! She had not long to wait for the woodmen, who came, and with cruel axes out into her very life.

A gloomy, glowing man in hunter's dress, with long gray hair and beard, directed their movements. The beech knew him right well, and he appeared to recognize the tree. He came close to her and tearing away both moss and vine he saw that heart and cross were safe. "Here it was," he muttered, and horror shook his very frame. "Back, Herr For-

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ester! Back!" cried the man. "The tree is falling!"

The warned man stepped back, but it was too late. With a deafening crash the beech fell to the ground and buried the forester under her corpse. When they picked him up, he was dead. The beech had crushed his head. And the men stood in a circle roundabout and prayed for his soul.—From the German.

Manna.

Manna is the concentrated juice of several plants which grow in great abundance in many parts of south Europe, Asia and Africa. The tree which most generously produces it is a sort of ash. The juice exudes from the stem during the summer months, as a consequence of the punctures of an insect that infests the tree, but the better kinds of manna, known as "flake manna," are obtained from incisions made in the bark. The poorer qualities come from the bark near the roots of the tree. The manna of commerce is obtained chiefly from Sicily and Calabria. A variety is collected by the Arabian Bedouins from a species of tamarix, which is used on bread like honey. The word is believed to be derived from the Syriac mano, a gift, though there is little evidence that the medical substance now known by that name has anything in common with the manna mentioned in the travels of the Israelites.

"The coldest day I ever knew," said the stranger, "was when I traveled up the branch to Ginton last winter. I knew it was cold when I saw the fireman get on top of the engine with a shovel to shovel away the smoke as fast as it froze. Soon after we started the conductor entered the car, knocked his head against the side of the door to break off his breath, and yelled 'Tickets!' before it froze again. But it was no use. The word only penetrated a few feet and stuck fast in the atmosphere, but, as we could all see clearly, we could not help noticing that word 'tickets' frozen up in the front end of the car, and we were ready when the smiling conductor passed along. He smiled because he couldn't help it. He wore that expression when he encountered the ozone, and it stuck to him. The poor fellow hit his hand against the seat in front of me and broke his little finger off as clean as if it had been an icicle. It rattled down on to the floor, but he picked it up calmly and put it in his vest pocket. He was used to that run."—Chicago Times-Herald.

The Boycott Is On.

Four hundred young women of Danbury, Conn., have organized the St. Peter's Temperance society.

The pledge these young women are signing has made the society the talk of the state. Each member promises, in addition to abstaining from intoxicating liquors, not to keep company with or marry any young man who drinks.

The young men have banded together to show their disapproval of what the young women have done. In the words of one of them, they have "boycotted" all young women who have joined the society. At a strawberry festival last week they refused to ask these young women to dance or to partake of refreshments.

It is said several engagements will be declared off, and that the batch of weddings next fall will be much smaller than in years past. The young women are receiving letters of congratulation from all over the state.—New York World.

SHEER NERVE DID IT.

ONE LONE HIGHWAYMAN HOLDS UP A STAGE IN OREGON.

Evidently Did Not Wish to Be Seen—The Passengers Obeyed His Commands With Alacrity—Very Near the Scene of a Similar Holdup.

A lone highwayman held up the stage from Ager to Klamath Falls, Or., a few nights since, and two passengers, the driver, the mail pouch and Wells, Fargo & Co.'s box were robbed under circumstances that are almost without parallel for sheer nerve and bravado.

The highwayman stood in ambush at the side of the road and did not once disclose his person, much less his identity, to his victims. But they literally obeyed his every command, which was delivered in a firm voice.

The driver and passengers seem to have been imbued with the assurance that instant death would follow disobedience in any particular.

The stage left the railroad at Ager at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, with Ed Walters as driver. About 10 o'clock, as the team slowed down to pull up the narrow Topsy grade, six miles long, a sudden command came from ambush beside the road for the driver to hold up and throw out the express box and letter pouches. The command was delivered in an imperious voice, and the driver did not stop to ask questions or wait for the robber to come from concealment. The express box and letter pouches were promptly thrown out.

The hidden highwayman then directed his attention to Wells, a stockman, and he was told to cut open the letter pouches. Wells demurred, but obeyed. He secured a pocketknife and began slashing away at Uncle Sam's letter bags. When the robber was satisfied that satisfactory progress was being made by the stockman, he directed Corra, the other passenger, to break open the box supposed to contain Wells, Fargo & Co.'s treasures. The merchant reluctantly went to work, but he seems not to have taken the proper implements of destruction and made so much noise and confusion that the robber directed him to desist. Then he bade the driver to take an ax from the stage and make a more successful job and less noise. Walters did as required.

When these things were done, the highwayman preferred a firm request from his place of concealment in the brush for the driver and passengers to take off their coats, and, besides, leave the contents of their pockets with the other booty. Again the trio complied, but it is believed that they lost little in that manner. The plucked passengers and driver were then allowed to get aboard the stage and drive on. It is not known whether any valuables were secured from the express box or letters.

The robbery took place within a few hundred feet of a similar robbery hardly a month ago, and there is little doubt that it was executed by the same lone highwayman. It was carried out in almost the same manner, the robber giving his orders from the darkness and not being seen by the driver and passengers, though his presence close at hand was as firmly impressed upon them as if he had stood at the horses' heads and covered them with his gun.—San Francisco Examiner.

Looks Like Leprosy.

At the Cleveland Medical society meeting Dr. W. E. Wirt, the president, exhibited a case of supposed leprosy.

The case was that of a girl 16 years old, who presented herself a few days ago at a clinic conducted by Dr. Wirt. The case had nearly all the symptoms of leprosy, and so marked were they that the doctor diagnosed it as such.

Of the history of the case Dr. Wirt said that when the child was 3 years old the mother first noticed a crack in the skin under the little toe. From that time the toes of the left foot gradually withered and absorbed, so that now they have disappeared. The deformed foot was exhibited and carefully examined by all the doctors.

A rather neat oratorical flight was that of Mr. Depew's on the occasion of the presentation of the Huntington portrait of Cyrus W. Field and his Atlantic cable coadjutors to the New York chamber of commerce. "When in Genoa a year ago," said he, "looking at that splendid statue of Columbus, which is its chief monument, I noticed upon the base this inscription: 'There was one world. Let there be two, and there were two.' After four centuries Mr. Field came with his cable and said: 'There are two worlds. Let there be one, and there was one.'"—Boston Herald.

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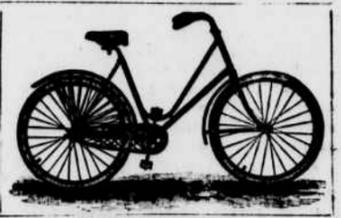
Yawns are subject to copyright in England. A lecturer on natural history took a photograph of a tiger yawning and copyrighted it. The sketch reproduced the picture and has just been obliged by the courts to pay \$250 damages for doing so. The yawn was identified by a cancerous growth in the tiger's mouth which was mistaken by The Sketch's artist for a normal part of the beast and was faithfully reproduced.

Judge Goff For President.

Every day has its presidential possibility. John W. Mason of West Virginia, who was commissioner of internal revenue under President Harrison, is out for Judge Goff, who was secretary of the navy under President Arthur and was subsequently given a place on the federal bench.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

These Bees Liked the Music.

As soon as a hand organ grinder started a tune the other day in Huntingdon, Pa., a swarm of 5,000 bees made a bee line for his organ and lit on it. The music appeared to have made them good natured, for they stung no one while they were being put back into their hive.—New York Times.



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