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CRUEL
AS
THE GRAVE,
on
The Secret of Dunraven Castle.

BY ANNIE ASHMORE,
Author of "Faithful Margaret," Etc., Etc

CHAPTER I.
SLEAT-NA-VRECKEN.

All day long the blast had scourged the northern seas into a maelstrom of boiling surf; the heavens were eclipsed by leaden clouds which trailed their ragged skirts along the surface of the waters; lightnings streamed from the rent skies like fire through an open door; thunders rolled—it was a wild day, that!

Set in the midst of this elemental frenzy, a rock-bound islet stood, black and steadfast; its basaltic cliffs were crowned by an ancient square embattled tower. A flag streamed from its turrets, the broad rose window of its chapel glimmered amid the wild wrack of the storm.

The breakers roared around the foot of the isle—leaped upon its rocky walls, flinging their snowy foam up even to the castle parapet, and fell back in a thousand silvery rills, to crouch and leap again in endless, ineffectual fury.

When the hour of sunset came, a wild glare shot from the angry west across the seething waste, and along that fiery pathway a little ship came fleeing before the storm under bare poles.

She was a slight and dainty craft, more fit for the silver reaches of the Thames than for these fierce Hebridean seas. Yet, like some high-couraged, beautiful animal running for its life, she still kept her ravening pursuers, the waves, behind her, and staggered on undaunted.

It was Edgar Arden's yacht, the Mergauser, which had been blown out of her course, and was now running head on for the iron bound isle as fast as the wind and current could drive her.

Edgar Arden and his stout-hearted men were utter strangers in these seas; they had made a long and gallant fight for dear life, and hoped even yet to slip by the looming rock and find safe searoom beyond.

But as that fierce ray lit the scene, showing distinctly for the first time the form of the foam-swashed rock, a voice rose from among the little company on the laboring bark, a voice like the knell of doom:

"The Sleat na-Vrecken! Beware the Sleat-na-Vrecken!"

The men, clinging each to his place that he might not be swept away by the crowding waves, turned with one accord to gaze at the utterer of the warning.

It was the only man among them who knew these waters, an old Highlander whom they had picked up about Tona for pilot.

Ean r shine, no eye had ever before seen old Kenmore moved; his spirit was hard as his country's granite, and not easily daunted, but he was daunted now. Elevated above them all and hanging on to the bare mast, with his long white locks drifting on the gale, he gazed upon the approaching isle in pale dismay.

"The Sleat-na-Vrecken!" echoed Edgar Arden quickly, "where have I heard that wild Norse name? Or is it only a reminiscence of some old sea legend? Strange! It rings familiar in my ear. But what particular peril are we in from that black rock? Eh, Kenmore."

He was a fine fellow, Arden; the beau ideal of a gallant, brave patrician; no sleepy languor or lily fingers with him, he was all life and fire, yet with that look in his flashing eyes which women love men for.

"Tender and true," as "Douglas" of the sweet ballad, was Arden of Inchcape; and if he had not yet discovered the lady who was destined to win his loyal heart, it was through no coldness of temperament or predominance of self-conceit.

Edgar Arden had not been very long promoted to the acknowledged heirship of a noble English house; he was the orphan son of the nearest of kin to the Earl of Inchcape; and when that nobleman lost his beautiful young wife abroad five years before, having no issue save a daughter by his first wife, he brought his heir-at law home to Inchcape Fosse, and formally ratified his rights.

Edgar was already a gentleman in character and breeding, and he entered that desolate house like a blessing to the embittered Inchcape, upon whom a crushing calamity had recently fallen. He had always heard so much of Inchcape's fine career, his philanthropic projects, his political power, that when he first came to the Fosse and found his kinsman a broken, brooding man, with noble aspirations all forgotten, and powers unheeded, his ardent young heart was touched, and he loved him with no common love.

Lord Inchcape gradually awoke to the comforting sweetness of this unexpected affection. He marked the youth and began to thank God that, since he was denied a son of his own body, this true man was to stand in that relation to him. Thus it was that Edgar became the beloved of Inchcape, master and people. He was denied nothing that he set his heart upon—his will was law.

He craved a yacht; the earl presented him with a nonpareil in yachts—the Mergauser. He wanted a crew; the due complement of men was culled from the flower of Lord Inchcape's tenantry. And well they loved their gallant young captain: they would have followed him round the world at his bid; nobody was so great or so good in their eyes as "Arden of Inchcape."

Edgar had been alone in the world since his infancy, when he lost both his parents. A guardian had then taken cold care of him according to the letter of his instructions, sending him to a first-class academy, and then to Eaton; but small was the home happiness until Lord Inchcape took him home to the Fosse.

Edgar had enjoyed his usual luck in his trip in the Mergauser until he took Kenmore aboard like a second Jonah.

He had never shown the least devotion to his young captain; he had been cold and formal in what brief intercourse he had deigned to hold with him, and a stern and silent man among his mates on board the Mergauser.

He was a man of giant stature, straight and massive as a tower, with snow white locks and pale-blue, piercing northern eyes. An expression of hauteur redeemed his rough-hewn features from vulgarity, and he had well-earned the respect of master and mates by his nautical skill and the scrupulous fulfillment of his duties.

As Edgar Arden demanded the nature of the peril which threatened them, the old man answered sternly:

"Many a brave ship has laid her bones at the foot of yon black rock. There's a current that runs like a mill race to the rock—it has got a grip of our keel by now, and we're but a leaf in the storm."

The boding words struck heavily on the hearts of the men; eye sought eye blankly; they were weary and faint from the toil of the day.

But Arden's cheery voice rang out again.

"While there's life there's hope," cried he. "My stout men know no fear, and we're all brave swimmers. I see an inhabited fort on the rock, and if our ship must go to pieces the people will doubtless be on the lookout for the poor castaways."

The half-drowned sailors burst out with a rousing hurrah! Hope returned when Arden spoke, his gallant spirit infused itself into every breast.

But Kenmore turned away with a look of chill unbelief, and fixed his eyes upon the isle, which was swiftly looming nearer. Gradually his stern features softened, and his keen eye filled with gentle emotion.

"Farewell! farewell! unhappy Dunraven," Edgar heard him muttering: "I've seen the curse fall upon you, but I'll never see it lifted. Farewell, fair injured lady! ye will tarry long for leal Kenmore, as ye've tarried for deliverance; they will not come! Farewell to you, proud Oolava, child of sorrow! In vain do your starry e'en shine o'er the lonely main, till a strong hand opens your cage ye canna win out! And whate'er comes to lady and child, I shanna be there to see; for old Kenmore will come again no more! no more!"

Arden listened to this weird outburst with indescribable amaze, a strange look on his face. It was not only that he was astonished at the revelation of a passionately loyal nature in this unbending old salt, or at the pure and poetical language which he used, enhanced as it was by that plaintive, musical intonation which is only to be heard north of Inverness.

He listened to the wild lament, and watched the scant and bitter tears of old age that started to the old man's eyes; and in spite of the peril of the moment, a sudden fiery curiosity possessed him; he felt as if he could not die until he had fathomed this amazing mystery.

When Kenmore had ceased to speak and was sinking into mournful reverie, Edgar abruptly addressed him,

"What do you know of Sleat-na-Vrecken?"

Kenmore started and met his eyes sternly.

"I was born upon Sleat-na-Vrecken—ay, and it looks as if I wad e'en die at its foot!" replied he.

"Than you know all about it?" said the young captain, eagerly; "you know whether the tower upon its summit is not called 'Dunraven Tower,' eh?"

Kenmore's stern face grew fierce, his beetling brows met over his flashing eyes in a sudden black scowl.

"Who spake of Dunraven?" growled he.

"Ah! I remember now!" cried Edgar in great agitation; "my lord's chart of his domains—the little islet in the northern seas, I saw it in print, but I never heard it pronounced before, and the name of the town was Dunraven!" His hurrying thoughts went on in silence; an incredible revelation was opening to him; he was stunned by it. He had conned over the great chart of Inchcape's possessions with the earl for instructor; and there he had seen the tiny islet Sleat-na-Vrecken crowned by Dunraven Tower.

"A wild place that!" he had said, laughingly; "how do you pronounce it?"

And my lord had moodily passed it by unpronounced, and his voice had sounded unnatural when next he spoke, upon a far different subject.

And now this Kenmore was lamenting the fates of an injured lady who would look in vain for her leal Kenmore, and of proud Oolava, a child of sorrow, whose cage door would never be opened to set her free until some strong hand came from afar! And "Arden of Inchcape" thought of the beautiful bride who had died abroad five years ago, to the utter spoiling of his kinsman's life; and of Lord Inchcape's fair daughter who was supposed to be still at her education on the Continent; and it struck him like the lightning's flash that he had found them—that they were in yonder Tower of Dunraven!

"Tell me," he said, imperiously, laying his hand upon the pilot's shoulder, "who dwells in Dunraven Tower?"

Kenmore was mute; he gazed in the young man's face with fierce curiosity.

"I see the flag flying from the turret," cried Edgar, "so I know that a member of the family is there. Who is it, man? I command you to tell me—I have a right to know."

Kenmore looked at the imperious young gentleman from head to foot, and his smile was grim as death.

"Maybe it's the lord himself," he vouchsafed to say at last.

"No! no! You know it is not," exclaimed Edgar. "Why should you like to deceive me?"

"Honored sir," quoth Kenmore, dryly. "if ye wad excuse the freedom I wad submit that ye had better be saying your prayers, 'gin we a' gang to the bottom, than peering into matters that concern ye not!"

"That's all you know! I may have a deep interest in this matter. Come, open your stubborn mouth, and tell me what I want to hear."

"May my tongue rot in my stubborn mouth before I speak the words!" exclaimed the old man fiercely.

"There's some strange mystery here," said Edgar, falling back from before the wile blaze of hate that shot from those pale-blue eyes: "Well, well, it is scarcely the time to pursue a clew when my life may just be ending. Yet who can say? Perhaps I may be carried within those tower walls before the day is done, dead or alive."

This he muttered to himself, but Kenmore, who was listening closely, retorted bitterly:

"Foul fall the day that sees a false Lowland face enter yonder walls! Rather wad I see these waves your winding-sheet and the foot of Sleat-na-Vrecken your grave!"

Arden had no time to express his astonishment at this heathenish remark, for at this moment a loud cry from the sailors recalled his attention to their present danger. The island was now so near that the very seaweed on the rocks could be distinctly seen, as it rose from time to time out of the boiling surf.

A landing stage ran out from the base of the cliff, but it was half the time drowned by the waves; no soul stood upon it

Suddenly a blaze streamed up from the top of the tower, and a deep-toned bell began to clang; the Mergauser was seen, and the people of the tower were signaling her.

Arden cheered his men with new hopes of rescue, and gave them careful instructions how to fight for their lives after the vessel struck. He then spoke a few quiet, heartfelt words to his mate, an intelligent young man who was much attached to him; he was giving him a message of farewell for Lord Inchcape in case of his own death. "Tell him I did my best to preserve his heir," said he, with a rueful laugh.

He then turned to Kenmore, who was once more wrapped in his own thoughts, saying heartily:

"You don't like me because I'm an Englishman, but then you don't know me, and it doesn't matter now. You are a loyal fellow and I honor you. There, let us die at peace with one another, if die we must." He extended his hand to the old Highlander, but even then Kenmore shook his head with a look of utter aversion.

"Lithe and mellow was the tongue that brought ruin upon Dunraven!" muttered he, "*and that tongue was English.* I canna forget! I canna forget!"

Edgar turned from him more in wonder than anger; a strange impatience came upon him, it seemed hard that he might die just when his foot was upon the verge of this undreamed of mystery.

And now the Mergauser was under the isle—entering its shadow—surrounded by its breakers.

Suddenly a man appeared upon the landing stage—another and another—a swarm of rescuers covered the wave-washed platform; and the small figure that clung to the face of the cliff above them, assigning to each his place with a wave of the hand—was a woman.

Arden could see her as distinctly as if she stood beside him, a darkly beautiful creature, in the earliest bloom of youth, clad in dark blue, with a glimmer of gold at forehead and throat, and a wild, white, inspired face turned toward the doomed yacht.

"It is Colava herself!" shouted Kenmore in ecstasy. "Saw you ever her peer among your whimpering dames?"

"So that is 'Oolava,' that fiery sea princess!" thought Edgar, with a leap of the heart, "that is Lord Dunraven's daughter!"

He could see the jetty curves of her hair and the panting of her breast. He met her deep, dark, flashing eyes; they pierced him to the very heart; when, with a shivering shock, the Mergauser struck—remained wedged as if in a vise; the pursuing waves caught up at last, lifted themselves up like a mountain, and descended with a crash upon the pretty toy, which went to pieces instantly.

CHAPTER II.
"DO THE DEAD AND THE LOST COME BACK?"

Edgar Arden had gone down in the seething depths at the foot of grim Sleat-na-Vrecken; when he next looked up the scene had mightily changed.

He lay in a noble apartment, simply and delicately furnished with pearly hues sparingly flecked with dead gold; lofty walls with dark polished panels finely carved; tall narrow windows heavily draped with gray velvets threaded with tarnished gold; an ancient room as any in Holyrood.

The bed he lay on was canopied and draped in antique fashion, its curtains had been swept apart at the foot, to allow the clear soft light of a waxen taper to fall upon his face. This taper was held in the hand of a lady who was watching him with rapt attention; for a few moments he gazed full in her face before she seemed to believe him awake and in his right mind.

The pleasant crackle of a fire in a distant part of the room was all the sound he heard.

What a strange, sad, brooding face hers was! So wan, so transparent, that he felt a shock almost as if he had seen a spirit. It was very evident that she had a history; storms had passed over that face, her eyes burned with the consuming fire of an ever living pain.

She had been very beautiful, of a graceful, spirituelle type, with the refined sentiment and elegant graces of gentle birth; but the glory of her day was past; her noble form was wasted, a deep melancholy darkened her expression.

Her dress was severely simple, no faintest attempt at decoration relieved it, and yet she wore it with such a grace, the lines of her form were so flowing, that she lent a majesty to the dress which no splendor could have given.

As his fainting faculties returned to him, Edgar contemplated this woman as if she had been a vision; but the spell was broken when she moved to bend over him with anxious solicitude.

Full recollection returned to Edgar, and with it the darting consciousness that here stood Lady Inchcape, his kinsman's lost wife.

Lovely as he had heard her called, sorrowful, pining as under a crushing and ever present affliction. Surely this was Engelonde Inchcape, for whose sake Lord Inchcape had renounced the world, and buried his noble powers and ambitions in brooding solitude in the meridian of his days.

In sudden overpowering excitement Edgar sprang up, stretched out his hands to the lady and made a gasping attempt to utter her name, but he fell back instantly, pressed down by the heavy hand of weakness and pain and could only lie white and panting, with a yearning look fastened upon her.

Startled by his abrupt movement, the lady flew to his side and took his hand in her own small, burning ones.

"Are you in pain? I am so sorry," said she sweetly. "What can I do for you?"

He lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it fervently, and still he could not command his voice to speak.

"You are very weak, and must not exert yourself," said she, soothingly. "You have been dreadfully hurt, though not mortally, and no bones are broken. I am glad to have such good news to tell you." She smiled gently, and seating herself by his pillow, began to fan him with a soft plumy scented fan, talking still in low, friendly tones that stole about the heart of her unknown kinsman with a strange power. "You want to hear the fate of your crew; be at peace, they were all saved, every one. A few fractures and contusions, that is the worst; but they are all made comfortable and are asleep in the cots of the Highland fishermen down by the shore. Does that relieve you?"

He nodded mute assent; his mind was in such confusion that he could do nothing but lie and regard her with his soul in his eyes.

Sweet lady, is this your fate? Chained to this sterile rock in the midst of the seas, consigned to your gnawing grief unhelped and uncomforted, while your bright beauty wastes in its summer prime.

Alas! beautiful Engelonde Inchcape, what had you done to deserve this?

"You are trying to recall whether you have ever seen me before," said she, shrinking uneasily under his unconscious gaze. "No, no; we are utter strangers to each other. You are in Dunraven Tower, and my simple Highland folk call me their lady, because I am the wife of their absent chief. How should you have met a recluse like me? No, no, no; our paths in life lie far apart." Her voice died away, she brooded mournfully over the thoughts suggested by her own words.

Edgar shook off the preoccupation which had hitharto held him dumb; he had resolved upon his course.

If he had indeed found Lord Inchcape's vanished wife and daughter in this seclusion, he had by chance stumbled upon a secret which the earl had never chosen to confide to him. It was clear that as yet Lady Inchcape did not suspect that he was her husband's heir, nor had he any right to complicate the situation by enlightening her. He might not long be obliged to intrude here—he determined to make an effort to maintain his incognito; at least until he had confessed his involuntary intrusion to Lord Inchcape.

Therefore he answered Lady Inchcape's last words by the statement, meant to reassure her evident anxiety lest he might have recognized her fact:

"No, madam, I am sure I have never met you anywhere before, far as I have traveled. I should never have forgotten you. And now that I owe my life to your goodness, I trust the day may come when I may prove my gratitude. Allow me to give you my name—Edgar; I am an Englishman."

He could not look at her, or speak to her in the impersonal conventional fashion warranted by their brief acquaintance, with all that he knew of her in his heart; and she felt the peculiar magnetism of his manner; she was attracted strangely, every word he spoke entered her heart as genuine.

"I make you welcome to my lonely home, Mr. Edgar," said she with her pensive smile; "although your visit was involuntary and we have the tempest to thank for our introduction to each other. None enter here from the outer world save the wretched and the lost"—the pathetic voice paused here and she seemed to follow the thought suggested by her last words a little way, her two brilliant eyes fixed on vacancy, but soon she roused herself and went on: "so that we have little to tempt us to watch the ocean, and we had almost let you perish before your yacht was discovered in the blinding drift. We have life-saving apparatus in readiness, and the fishermen are accomplished surfmen; but in the absence of their leader Kenmore (your pilot) they were not so vigilant perhaps as usual, and no one observed the little vessel in distress until my bright-eyed daughter saw it from the turret, where she was enjoying the storm. She it was who lit the beacon-fire and rang the alarm; and she who flew to the shore in time to organize the men, and thus save every life. She is her father's child, my brave Ulva!"

Lady Ulva Inchcape, only daughter of the earl, whom the world supposed abroad in some pension at her education! The Oolava of the old Kenmore's lament, the Child of Sorrow!

Strange, sad fate for one so young, if this bleak rock was all her world and the gray seas her horizon!

"Then I and my faithful crew owe our lives to your stepdaughter!" cried Edgar, with sparkling eyes.

"How can you guess that she is only my stepdaughter?" inquired she, looking earnestly at him. "I could not have said that—I never call her that; she is too dear to me"—she broke off in agitation, her eyes searching his piteously. "Perhaps Kenmore has been talking about this family?" asked she, a burning flush gradually mantling her pure, pale face, and her eyes sinking before his in deep and painful embarrassment.

His heart bled for her. She shrank in anguished shame from the very idea of being recognized; yet he could have staked his life upon her innocence of the faintest wrong. Kenmore had called her an "injured lady"—yes, she was that, Edgar was convinced of it.

"Dear Lady Dunraven, Kenmore distinctively refused to utter one word concerning the isle which we expected to send us to the bottom," said he, lightly; "I think he held me as deliberately guilty of being born an Englishman, and would not waste good language upon me or mine. May I tell you how I knew that Lady Ulva was not your own child? I saw her standing on the cliff just before we went down."

"But you were in the very jaws of death; how could you notice what she was like?" asked Lady Dunraven with a faint smile, and a keener look at him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Threads of Thought.

To know one's self is to distrust one's self.

Each life may have a potentiality of greatness.

To be misunderstood by those we love is bitterest of all.

Find a disinterested friend and you have found a jewel.

The greatest study of all is that of the changes of the mind.

Success has sometimes to be paid for, after having been fairly earned.

One is led to think that there is but little that is constant nowadays save mutability.

The philosopher takes his fortune much as he does his health—enjoys it when it is good, endures it when bad, and seeks extreme remedies only at the most urgent need.

A FUNNY incident occurred while some blasting operations were in progress lately at Hull, Quebec. An unusually heavy charge was about to be fired, and everybody had been warned away. A little dog immediately jogged over to the edge of the pit where the explosion was about to take place. The canine stood wagging its tail, the onlookers at a distance, of course, thinking it was indulging in a final bark. With a loud report the rock below was rent asunder, the men ran over, and to their astonishment found the little dog uninjured and barking with all its might at the noise in the middle of a cloud of smoke.

STOP THE WASTAGE.

An Expert Tells How Agricultural Resources May Be Increased.

The wonderful loss to farmers brought about by the neglect to properly utilize the resources and to employ knowledge that is considered indispensable in other kinds of business is one of the causes of depression in agriculture. This is more particularly the case in the South than elsewhere, although much has been done within the past few years to check this loss. The Southern people are just beginning to appreciate the advantages of employing their other resources than those of cotton production. In the past the South has been too largely dependent upon the colored man and the mule. The result has been, and will continue to be, so long as they practice a one-crop system, that they will be subject to periods of discouraging depression. In other words, where the farmer put all of his eggs in one basket and meets with some accident he is confronted by the loss of his entire source of support until nature has time to produce another crop. Should it fail a second and third time the poor farmer is left in a desperate way. In the South the wonderful resources for feeding the North upon early vegetables have not been utilized as they can be. There has been and will continue to be a large wastage of products upon the farm, most particularly in the failure to properly utilize cotton seed and its products.

Where favorable terms with the cotton seed oil mills can be made it is well enough to sell the excess of cotton seed and either exchange it or buy cotton seed meal. The intelligent farmer, with the aid of the experiment station or the officers of the agricultural college of his State, can readily figure out whether it is more profitable to sell and buy or to keep and feed or use as a fertilizer. If the farmer keeps his cotton seed he should at once provide for feeding it to stock. Cheap sheds can be constructed to properly protect the cattle from the cold rains which are so trying on stock in the winter, and the manure carefully preserved in a shed will give the farmer a double profit. In fact, I might say a treble profit. For in this way, by preserving his manure in the form of a compost heap and mixing with it from time to time some potash and a moderate supply of phosphate, he would save the profit charged by dealers in fertilizers and secure to himself the profit of the cotton seed as a fertilizer and as a feed stuff. Besides this he would be able to utilize the hay which is produced in great quantities upon the Southern farms and only needs to be harvested and fed in order to make it profitable.

The use of kainit in a compost heap cannot be too highly recommended, as it preserves to the farmer his valuable nitrogen and serves as a preventive of waste upon the farm. The addition of the acid phosphate makes a complete manure that is highly satisfactory for all kinds of crops and on almost all kinds of soil. We advise every farmer to do some close figuring and see if he can afford to sell his cotton seed at ten dollars a ton or exchange it for 725 pounds of cotton seed meal. It will be one of the most profitable rainy days' work he ever did if he will calculate all of profits and losses and carefully study how he could save several dollars per ton by feeding stock and preparing his fertilizers at home. He may find that he is selling his birthright for a mess of pottage when he parts with his cotton seed at prevailing rates. He may find that he can save largely by producing more fertilizers upon the farm and by buying simply the potash salts and the acid phosphate necessary to properly utilize his present wastes.

Stop the wastes upon the farm. Utilize its products in an economic manner. Prevent loss to live stock and fertilizers by exposure to the weather and cold drenching rains. Avoid injudicious sales of valuable farm products and the purchase of fertilizers that should be saved upon the farm. Where fertilizers are bought let them be supplemented to those produced upon the farm, and purchase those ingredients necessary to perfect the fertilizer products of the farm. Avoid wastage of labor by cultivating unprofitable lands and see that all cultivated land is well fertilized.

DR. JOHN A. MYERS,
Ex-Director West Virginia Experiment Station.

He who recklessly injures his health does not thus prove his unselfishness—he simply curtails his powers of doing good; and he who injures his character by welcoming evil influences is thereby inflicting a still greater evil upon the community.

White Bull, the warlike Cheyenne, explains that he was drunk when he killed the white settler and precipitated trouble. White Bull ought to have known that it would be dangerous for him to have more than two horns at a time.

Pennsylvania has proposed a bill making the truth a complete vindication in all libel suits. If that bill becomes a law henceforth it will be practically impossible to libel any Keystone politician.

"What kind of language was that you were talking to baby just now, mamma?" asked little Ethel. "That's baby talk, my dear," replied the mother. "And did I once understand that, mamma?"—Yonkers Statesman.

Prof. Hinton of Princeton has invented a cannon to be used in the pitcher's box instead of a high-priced twirler. It should be clearly understood, however, that the umpire has a right to use that artillery in his own defense if necessary after a close decision.

THE GEORGIA HUMORIST

A TRIBUTE TO HIS OLD FRIEND, CONDUCTOR BILL.

The Various Kinds of Manners—Philosopher Hurries From Florida and Goes West on Another One of His Lecturing Tours.

Good, gentle old Sanford Bell, the faithful veteran of the bell cord, is dead. He was the oldest conductor in the state—perhaps the oldest in long and continuous service in the United States, and maybe in the world. He was not a great man, but he was a true man, honest and faithful, and every traveler respected him. I have known him and traveled with him for forty years and always loved him, for he was patient and kind. He was firm and did his duty, but without anger or rudeness. I never saw him out of good temper or unduly excited, but duty was his watchword. No wonder he was kept in office from administration to administration, for railroad officials appreciate such men, and even when he became too infirm to swing around the curves, Mr. Thomas, that prince of railroad kings, gave him an easier berth, and saved money by it, for who could settle disputes over killed and damaged stock like Sanford. The people all along the line respected him and in most cases left the adjustment to his sole judgment. Small lawyers ceased to fatten on small litigation. "Sanford Bell says so," was the law and the verdict. What a record for an unpretending man. My regard for these true and patient men increases with my years—these tried conductors, these engineers who day and night stand at the throttle and realize the responsibility that is upon them. Like the pilots on the great steamships, they are ever on the lookout for danger. Their eyes seem to have grown nearer together and more searching from the strain of constant use in looking down the ever changing track. I feel like tipping my hat to them all and saying God bless you and protect you, for my life is in your hands when I travel. If danger or disaster comes they receive the first shock, and oftentimes the last to them. How thoughtless and unconcerned we travelers ride, with never a thought about the engineer in whose hands we are. Sometimes we read of a wreck and the telegram says: "Engineer and fireman killed; passengers all escaped." To my mind there is something grandly heroic in the callings of these men who move the wheels and stop them; these engineers and brakesmen who have no choice of time or weather. In the bleak and wintry night they must breast the storm. "Goodby wife, goodby mother, my time is out." He kisses the children and is off. Not long ago I heard a poor, fond mother say: "My Tom is running on the railroad now and helps us with his pay. He is a brakeman on a freight train, and it is a pretty hard place in bad weather, but you know there are no easy places now."

There are many kinds of manners—manners at the table and the fireside and in the church and in stores, on both sides of the counter, and there are railroad manners, both of the officials and the travelers. Not long ago I boarded the Alabama Great Southern, of the Southern, at Chattanooga, and before the train moved out an official came through the car and in a quiet, polite manner asked every one of us where we were going. He found one man who was going to Atlanta and quickly hurried him off and on to the Atlanta train. I liked that; it was good railroad manners and was new to me. Railroad officials can hardly realize how bewildered strangers feel in a large union depot and how grateful they are for information, especially when it is kindly volunteered. Poor, timid women unaccustomed to traveling are so afraid they will make a mistake. I came from Florida last Monday and was impressed with the kindness and attention of a conductor, a Mr. Seabring, who runs from Tampa to Waycross. No woman was too humble or poorly clad to receive his considerate care. He assisted them in and out and took their babies in his arms and provided them comfortable seats and had his porter to take water to their little ones. He not only answered questions willingly and politely, but gave more information than was asked for. Most all conductors are civil and courteous, but some answer you in a perfunctory manner and pass on. Mr. Seabring's face seemed to invite you to ask for something, so that he might oblige you. He did not know me nor that I was observing him, but I cannot refrain from saying he is the model conductor. From Waycross to Tifton we were not calm and serene. The night was cold, very cold, and the car was colder, for there was no fire and the porter did not seem to care whether we froze or not. We complained bitterly to the conductor and in an hour or so he had the porter to make one. He started a small, sickly blaze in the heater and left us. It soon went out and we never got any fire until we got to Tifton and changed conductors and porters. Mr. Flournoy was as indignant as we were and never stopped his personal supervision until we were thoroughly warmed and revived. There is a difference in conductors.

And there is a greater difference in travelers. Some will politely offer to share the seat with you, while others will stretch themselves and look the other way to keep from being disturbed. They act like they have the smallpox and don't want you to catch it. My daughter and I sat behind a bridal couple as we went down, and notwithstanding the car was crowded and people still coming in, the selfish old rascal with his young wife occupied four seats and stuck their feet upon one and looked defiance at everybody. Women came in with their children and passed and repassed, and found no seat. The old groom had long, reddish-gray whiskers and the bride of twenty-five had her black hair bobbed short in an aggravating style and leaned her head upon his shoulder while she affected sleep. By and by a countryman with a little girl in his arms came in and after walking up and down a few times, stopped and surveyed the couple for a minute. Still there was no sign. At last he said, with some temper, "I reckon maybe perhaps if you ones would lift your feet offen that seat I could find some place to set down with this child. I've toted her about a mile a'ready." They lifted them with alacity and tried to turn the seat, and found it locked. "That don't matter," he said, as he put down the child, "I'm not gwine to hurt ye." We enjoyed that immensely.

I wonder what makes so many of these youngish girls (youngish is a good word) marry these old men. Every since General Longstreet set the example every old widower in the country is hunting for a girl wife. The widows have been thrust out of the market. That is all right, maybe, if the girl is poor and the widower rich and he will settle a good estate upon her and die in a reasonable time. What curious transactions such things sometimes bring about. Some years ago a rich old widower of our county married a young wife and she was loyal to him until he died, which was in a reasonable time, and she fell heir to his splendid homestead with all the land attached, and soon married again. Not long after this she died and her last husband now steps over the rich man's land as sole owner and proprietor of that he never gave a dollar for.

Our brief visit to Florida last week was on business and I hurried home to go west on another lecture tour. It grieved me to leave Clear Water, which is lovelier than ever. It is still the sweetest town that ever grew beside the shore. Many improvements have been made since we were there and half a million has been spent by Mr. Plant on the spacious property a mile below. Everything at Bellair is on a grand scale. Its drives and walks and lakes and gardens; its grand hotel that overlooks the green waters of the gulf; its ornamental shrubbery and long lines of stately palms; its coliseum and boulevards and gasworks and waterworks all astonished and charmed us, for it seemed as though Aladdin had been there with his wonderful lamp and done it all—not in a night, but within a year, for it has not been much longer since I was there and drove through that chaparral of scrub palmetto and saw nothing to attract me save the view of the distant islands and the foaming breakers of the gulf beyond. Another half million will make the place a paradise, but after all Bellair is artificial, the handiwork of man and money, while Clear Water is the work of nature and of God. The one is an embryo city of magnificent distances; the other a cozy village nestled on a bluff among evergreen oak and bays and palms and cedars and climbing vines, all clad in mossy tresses, and where the beautiful homes, half hidden, overlook the placid harbor and the setting sun, and where the children play upon the beach or wade in the waters at the foot of the hill. Somehow the place reminds me of those beautiful lines—

"And I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled
From among the dark elms that a cottage was near,
And I said to myself, if there is peace in this world,
The heart that is humble might look for it here."

I said to my friend, Mrs. Aunspaugh, who has been living there twelve years, "has anybody died since I was here?" "Nobody," she replied. "Have you found the graveyard yet?" "I have not," she said. "There has not been a burial in it since we have lived here and the way to it is all choked up with saw palmetto."—BILL ARP, in Atlanta Constitution.

The population of Sweden includes 4,066 Germans.

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