WHEN THE SON HAD THE DEED.

Slowly the toil-cramped, gnarled old fist
  Wrought at the sheet with a rasping pen;
Halted with tremulous quirk and twist,
  Staggered, and then went on again.
The wan sun peeped through the wee patched pane
  And checkered the floor where pale beams shone
In a quaint old kitchen down in Maine,
  With an old man writing there alone.
And the pen wrought on and the head drooped low
  And a tear plashed down on the rusted pen,
As it traced a verse of the long ago
  That his grief had brought to his heart again.

"Be kind to thy father, for when thou wast young
  Who loved thee so fondly as he?
He caught the first accents that fell from thy tongue,
  And joined in thy innocent glee.
Be kind to thy father, for now he is old,
  His locks intermingled with gray;
His footsteps are feeble, once fearless and bold—
  Thy father is passing away.

"Be kind to thy mother, for, lo! on her brow
  May traces of sorrow be seen.
Oh, well mayst thou cherish and comfort her now,
  For loving and kind hath she been.
Remember thy mother, for thee she will pray
  As long as God giveth her breath
With accents of kindness; then cheer her hard way
  E'en through the dark valley of death."

Listlessly thrashed in a careless court,
  The poor, plain tale of a home was told,
Furnishing food for the lawyers' sport
  And a jest at the fond and the foolish old.
The counsel said, as he winked an eye:
  "Deeded the farm to their only son:
And after 'twas deeded they didn't die
  Quite as quick as they should have done."
Drearily dragged the homely case,
  Petty and mean in all its parts;
Quest through the law for an old home place,
  But never a word of two broken hearts.

Only a suit where the son and wife
  Pledged themselves, when they coaxed the deed,
To comfort the close of the old folks' life:
  Only another case where greed
Sneered at the toil of the hard, hard years
  Of martyrdom to the hoe and ax,
Writ in wrinkles and etched in tears
  And told in the curve of the old bent backs,
Bent in the strife with the rocky soil,
  When the grinding work was never done,
With just one rift in the cloud of toil—
  'Twas all for the sake of their only son.

Simply a tedious legal maze
  With neighbors stirring the thing for sport,
And loungers eying with listless gaze
  This queer old couple dragged to court.
Meekly they would have granted greed
  All that it sought for—all its spoil;
Little they valued a forfeit deed.
  Nor selfishly reckoned their years of toil,
Heartsick they while the lawyers urged,
  Mute when the law vouchsafed their prayer—
Courts soothed not such grief as surged
  In the hearts of the old folks trembling there.

What though the jury's word restored
  The walls and roof of the old home place?
Would it give them back the blessed hoard
  Of trust that knew no son's disgrace?
Would it give them back his boyhood smiles,
  His boyhood love, their simple joy?
Would it heal the wounds of these afterwhiles,
  And make him again their own dear boy?
Would it soothe the smart of the cruel words,
  Of sullen looks and cold neglect?
And dull the taunts that pierced like swords
  And slashed where the wielders little recked?

No; justice gives the walls and roof,
  To palsied hands a canceled deed,
Rebuking with a stern reproof
  A son's unfilial, shameless greed.
But love that made that old home warm,
  And hope that made all labor sweet,
The glow of peace that shamed the storm
  And melted on the pane the sleet,
And faith and truth and loving hearts
  And tender trust in fellow-men—
Ah, these, my friend, no lawyer's arts
  Can give again, can give again.
—Holman Day, in Lewiston Journal.

Helen Dacy's Lunatic

HELEN DACY went to Elgin—not because she was insane, but because she had a second cousin who was. Elgin is a beautiful town, but its street car service is not good, and Helen walked through the village up to the pleasant park with which the state has surrounded the asylum for the insane. It is a walk of considerable length from the gate of the grounds to the building, and Helen was to encounter a melancholy sight. As she went along the serpentine path, a procession came toward her. There must have been a hundred men in it and they moved slowly and most of them walked with bowed heads. Their feet appeared to press the earth heavily. At first Helen thought it must be a funeral procession, but a moment later she perceived that it was something more distressing. It was the walk of those who had survived their own death. In other words, it was a body of insane patients, exercising the bodies that held their perished minds. Helen shrank aside and stood fascinated while they passed her. Some of them looked at her curiously, or with lack-luster gaze, or wistfully. A sudden appreciation of her own youth and health and sanity came over her and made her all the more pitiful toward these unfortunates.

The procession had passed and she was about resuming her way to the hospital, when one of the men quitted the ranks and walked hurriedly toward her. None of the rest looked around. The attendants had not noticed his desertion, and his steps on the sward made no sound. He came with a rapid, gliding step toward Helen, showing his teeth in a broad smile. Helen decided that, however impertinent his intentions might be, at least he was in good humor. This was consoling. But it did not keep her hands from turning cold with nervous dread.

As he approached he lifted his hat with a courtly air. It was evident that the poor wretch had once been a gentleman, but even the most gentlemanly of lunatics was not a companion to choose, and Helen moved behind a low lilac bush. She felt that she was white and that her eyes were wide-stretched, but she tried not to show her alarm. Confidence, she had always heard, was needed in dealing with the insane. The man moved more cautiously and fixed an undeviating gaze upon Helen.

"Madam," said the man in a peculiarly quiet voice, "it is a pleasant morning."

Something in the words suggested a scene in "Hamlet" to Helen, and she bethought herself of an experiment. She would soon determine whether or not the man had a gleam of reason.

"Is it?" she asked, turning her eyes to the sky. "Why, indeed, I thought it was raining!"

The man had a look in his face akin to pity. "Perhaps you are right," he replied, gently. "It may be raining. It is not always possible for me to tell except when I see people carrying their umbrellas."

"Sensory nerves quite obtuse," thought Helen. "I have heard that it is common with degenerates." The man moved a little nearer, and Helen ventured to go still further around the lilac bush. He stopped still, and they faced each other over the low shrubbery. What an agreeable looking creature he was with his soft brown eyes, his long, delicate face, and his high brow. He looked as if he might have been intended for a poet. Probably he had been, but had gone one step further. Helen had not read Lombroso for nothing.

"Do you ever write poetry?" she asked, with genuine curiosity.

The man blushed. Helen had not dreamed a lunatic would blush.

"When I find a fitting subject," he confessed.

"Ah! And what should you consider a fitting subject?"

"Why—you!" The words came out explosively. They did not seem to be meant for a compliment. The man spoke pathetically. It seemed as if there were tears in his eyes. Helen answered as if he were a child.

"Do I seem so sad to you?" she asked. "Does it make the tears come in your eyes to look at me, poor man?"

"Indeed it does," he replied, quite simply. "I think you are the saddest thing I ever saw."

"I wouldn't die for anything," she explained. "I like to live. I find plenty of things to laugh at." And to convince his wandering wits that this was the truth she broke into a merry laugh which astonished the melancholy spirit of the place.

"If I give you my hand," said the man, kindly, "will you not walk back with me to the house?"

To take his hand, to let him get a hold upon her! It was ghastly. He moved toward her. There seemed nothing for it but to run, and run she did, speeding over the soft lawn with a rapidity that astonished herself. She could hear him calling to her, but she sped on, till finally, a hysterical impulse, born of her fright and fatigue, took hold of her. She began to laugh again, and the musical, half-weeping laughter floated behind her as she fled. Then, breathless, she stumbled in a ground mole's tunnel and fell flat. She buried her face in the grass and waited, her heart pained with the stress of its work. A second later two arms were about her and she was lifted to her feet. She faced the lunatic. They were of a height and they stood looking at each other, both of them pale and trembling, his arm still supporting her.

"Poor child," he murmured, "how sorry I am that I frightened you. Perhaps I ought not to have run after you. But I was afraid you would leave the grounds and come to some harm."

She would have liked to explain to him that one need not come to harm ouside of the grounds, but perhaps it was as well that he thought otherwise. She would tell him the truth about herself. Perhaps he would understand. Ah, what a pity that such an engaging face should hide a ruined mind!

"You must try to understand," she said, slowly, "that I do not live here in the—in the hospital. I am here for the first time. I have not yet been up to the—the building, you know. I came to visit a relative who is here. It seems a pleasant place. Have you been here long?"

"My dear young lady!" cried he, "I also am a visitor. I also came to visit an acquaintance, with whom I was walking a moment since. I approached you to ask if you knew when the next train went to town, but when I addressed you I judged from your reply that you were one of the inmates."

Helen sank gently down on the grass.

"I think I must rest a moment," said she. "I—I am much surprised!" Her tone indicated something more than surprise. It confessed to a great relief. She paid her visit to the asylum and she and Victor Law, her lunatic, went back on the same train together. To both of them the afternoon seemed the most interesting of their lives.

"Why were there tears in your eyes," she asked before they parted, "when you talked with me at first?"

"Why, it seemed to me that I had never encountered anything so sad as a shattered mind behind eyes so—please pardon me — so beautiful as yours. I know I am rude, but I must speak the truth. If you had been mad I should have remembered you with sorrow all the days of my life."

"Being sane, I suppose you will forget me?"

But she knew well that he would not give himself the opportunity. She was quite certain that she should see him often. It would have been a grotesque anti-climax not to have met again after that afternoon.—Chicago Tribune.

Needed a Hair-Cut.

Short sight is not tolerated in a common soldier, but sometimes it is necessary to tolerate it in an officer. Furthermore, there are many short sighted officers who are unwilling to wear glasses. Such an one was a certain captain in the British army of whom a story is told in an English paper. During a kit inspection a man had been left propped with the head uppermost against a spare bed cot. The short-sighted captain entered and glanced at the mop. Then he snapped his fingers. "Color-sergeant!" he exclaimed. "Yes, sir," said the sergeant saluting. "See that that man has his hair cut immediately!" said the captain, pointing at the mop.—Youth's Companion.

Things He Could Remember.

Tourist—And how many children have you, Mr. Green?

Farmer Green (doubtfully)—Well now, I dunno exactly. There's Bob an' Jack an' Alice—wife, how many children are there?

Mrs. Green—Seven; five boys and two girls.

Tourist—A fine family and a fine farm, Mr. Green. You've a large stock, I presume?

Farmer—Aye. I've 173 head of cattle, eight horses, 781 sheep, an' 21 pigs. Then there's 315 geese, 18 turkeys, an' just 259 fowls.—London Tit-Bits.

SLEPT IN A WAGON.

How a Circus Ticket Seller Bunked During a Season's Traveling About the Country.

"I slept in a wagon all summer," said Dolph Gessley, the well-known ticket seller of the Robinson circus, which had just finished its seventy-fifth annual season of travel. "Yes, sir, in a wagon. The rest of the show people slept in regular sleeping cars. Now you would think they had the best of it, wouldn't you? But they didn't. My bed was made up in the wagon in which I sold tickets. Along the sides of it are benches. I had a cot bed from which the legs were removed. The benches had lids, and inside were boxes where the tickets and other stuff necessary were kept. In one compartment I had the bedding, in another towels and other toilet essentials. After the count up at night I pulled down the cot top, got out my sheets and blankets and made up my bed. Then I turned in after folding up my clothes. The ticket wagon is a finely constructed affair, with platform springs, and rides like a fashionable carriage. The "razorbacks," or common laborers with the show, would, when the time came to entrain, run the wagon onto a flat car and chock the wheels securely. The car has super-springs, and rides like a passenger coach. The cot top was laid across the aisles, of which the benches formed the sides, so there were three places to take up the motion—the car springs, the wagon springs and the elastic cot webbing. I was as snug as a bug in a rug. By leaving a window in the rear open I got a fine breeze, and in the hottest nights was cool and comfortable. Many a morning I awoke up to find the wagon on the circus lot, miles from the depot. I slept so soundly that I never felt the wagon being detrained or driven uptown. Then my wagon man would bring up water, and my toilet was a matter of a moment or two. Bathing? Why a man with a circus can bathe every day in the dressing tent. The folks in the sleeping car had many discomforts. Anybody that has traveled in a crowded Pullman car appreciates this fact. All want to go to bed at the same time and get up together. The aisles are crowded with clothing and impedimenta, and then there is the snoring and talking that is inevitable. Oh, I tell you, I was comfortable. Some of the razor-backs had a novel way of bunking for the night. They slept in hammocks, which were slung under wagons from axle to axle. I never tried it, but those who did tell me that it is exceedingly comfortable. Lots of fresh air, you know. Curiously enough, they didn't get wet and the cinders don't fly under the wagons. On dusty nights they get a little of loose Mother Earth, but not so much as you would think. Nothing could induce me to trade my Gessley palace sleeping car, as I call my wagon bed, for one of Pullman's make. I have privacy, room and comfort, and no sleeping car can boast of this triple advantage."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

AN AMERICAN GIRL.

One Who Defied Regulation of Queen Victoria's Court, But Gained Admission.

A delightful little story has only lately come to light of how a pretty and audacious San Francisco girl defied the regulations of Queen Victoria's court. Along in the seventies bonnie Nellie Chapman, daughter of William S. Chapman, the well-known mine owner, found herself on the eve of her presentation to England's queen. Now there are certain rules of high etiquette laid down for these occasions. Among the rest royalty prescribes the exact length of a train and the degree of exposure required of the arms and bust. But Nellie Chapman had ideas of her own on the latter subject, and when it came to the shaping of the gown she was to wear for the grand event the American girl had the height of her corsage arranged to suit her own ideas of what was desirous and appropriate. It was an extremely dainty gown of white satin, perfectly fitted to the slight and graceful figure, with chaste trimmings of tulle and garlands of white marguerites, diamonds and pearls giving it a touch of elegance, and above it all the fair republican face carried with truly regal spirit. But, alas! on the threshold of the drawing-room she was stopped by an imperious chamberlain, who loftily informed her that she could not go in, as her gown was not low enough in the neck. For one moment the spirited American girl was dismayed, then, with a scornful look at the courtier, she lifted her little gloved hand, and, giving both shoulders of the corsage an impetuous twitch, bared her dimpled shoulders, and with the defiant: "Now it will do," walked past the astonished gentleman-in-waiting. She afterward had her picture taken in the court dress which so nearly brought her to social grief.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Cossacks as Horse Traders.

A few months ago a Russian veterinary surgeon was sent into the Ural district by the government to buy horses for the army. He had been selected by his superiors because he was famous as a shrewd and sharp horse trader, who never had been beaten in a horse trade. But he returned from his experience with the Ural Cossacks in a chastened condition of mind, for they had cheated him frightfully. He confessed that with all his cunning he had been perfectly helpless in their hands, and he swore by all the saints in the Russian calendar that nothing should tempt him to try again. His grief was made the more poignant by the fact that at the time they were swindling him so cheerfully and successfully a Russian bunko steerer struck their territory, filled them with a firm conviction that the world was coming to an end in short order and sold them tickets for paradise at enormous prices!—N. Y. Press.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

A profile photograph is merely a side-show.

Some people are vain because of their many defects.

The man who listens to a political orator gets the stuff.

It's always hard to convince a pretty girl that love is blind.

Men naturally dislike to sit down on tacks, but not on the tax collector.

The starter at a race track is one man who is always taken at his word.

The average man is a good nurse when it comes to coddling imaginary wrongs.

It doesn't require practice to enable a man to drop a hot plate with perfection.

Cold contracts and heat expands. This is especially applicable to the iceman's income.

Sneer not at the afflictions of others. It is doubly cruel to beat a cripple with his own crutch.

The author whose books are popular enough for a paper cover can afford to cover himself with broadcloth.

The man who can look his wife in the eye at two p. m. and explain to her satisfaction why he didn't get home earlier is an exception.

Whenever a man gets the best of a bargain he calls it cunning, but when the other fellow gets the best of it it's a barefaced swindle. — Chicago Daily News.

Ephraim Latulip, of Oswego, N. Y., asserts that he has rediscovered the lost art of hardening copper. He says that he can make it as hard as steel, so that it will retain an edge as keen as a razor.

Prosperity for 1900.

Indications everywhere point to great prosperity for the coming year. This is an invariable sign of a healthy nature. The success of a country, as well as the success of an individual, depends upon health. There can be no health if the stomach is weak. If you have any stomach trouble try Hostetter's Stomach Bitters which cures dyspepsia, indigestion and biliousness. It makes strong, vigorous men and women.

Ambiguous.

An Irish cyclist was bitten on the leg by a savage bull terrier. He wrote a long complaint to the local paper, the communication closing with the sentence: "The dog, I understand, belongs to the town magistrate, who resides in the neighborhood, and is allowed to wander on the road unmuzzled, and yet he sits on the bench in judgment on others."—Philadelphia Call.

FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER.

Germany makes a celery oil.

Perfumes in pills are new.

Eggs are best 12 hours after laid.

Queen Victoria eats American pickles.

Some girls make belts from old neckties.

Never feed a baby directly before its bath.

The cradle is returning to popular favor.

Clear boiling water will remove tea stains.

Sugar burnt in a gas flame is death to mice.

In Austria they make flour out of potatoes.

Some alleged olive oil is made from peanuts.

Rice should be washed in hot water, not cold.

The colder eggs are the quicker they will froth.

The saucer of charcoal purifies the refrigerator.

Onions peeled under water will not disturb the eyes.

The X-ray is used to detect the adulteration of flour.

Try a teaspoonful of sherry in a cup of chocolate.

Meat should always be cooked with the fat downward.

Raw cabbage is more easily digested than when cooked.

Stewed cucumbers are as nice as cream cauliflower.

Princess Victoria of England is an accomplished cook.

CALENDAR FOR 1900.

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Her Modest Hint.

He—Were you ever caught beneath the mistletoe?

She—Perhaps you had better come around on Christmas and see if I act like one who has had experience.—Chicago Times-Herald.

The person who gives a note is allowed three days of grace—after that how many of disgrace we are not in a position to state. —Philadelphia Times.

"Why did Coit introduce an automobile in his last farce comedy?" "He was tired of hearing the critics accuse him of horse-play."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Why did Coit introduce an automobile in his last farce comedy?" "He was tired of hearing the critics accuse him of horse-play."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

It is only when she is poor and homely that a girl can be sure the man who woos her is really in love.—Chicago Dispatch.

Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your word.—Chesterfield