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Selected Miscellany.

WINNING A HEART BY CUTTING A HOLE IN THE HEAD.

BY A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

"You urge that there is no romance in our profession."

"To be sure I do; things happen queerly sometimes, and we make strange acquaintances in the course of our practice, I admit; but that anything positively romantic, as the word is understood, occurs in the practice of surgery, I deny."

Thus discoursed two young gentlemen who wrote M. D. at the end of their names.

"Charles," said the elder of the two, "light your cigar and listen. Two years before I received my degree, the events here narrated occurred."

He opened a portfolio, and commenced reading as follows:

"During a period of time occupied by me in a tour through the New England States, in the year 185—, I was on board a steamboat crowded with passengers. The State of Maine had attractions for me, and to one of its towns I was destined. Among the many groups that were enjoying the sight of the sea in their chosen positions on the steamer's deck, a few hours after our departure, the attention of many observers was attracted more particularly to a family party of three persons—an elderly gentleman of intellectual appearance and two young ladies—daughters—one an invalid, the other the incarnation of health and beauty. The object of their journey was the restoration of the health of the afflicted one, by change of scene, and the magic potency in most cases, of the invigorating sea breeze. Having selected a seat near this party, for no motive of listening to their discourse, the earnest manner of the elderly lady prevented any other result. I heard her father's repeated cautions, and he earnestly entreated her to be careful if she remained upon the deck alone.

"There is no danger, father," said she, "I would not wish to live if I am to be the slave of fear."

For the first time, I had become interested in her character, and a silent prayer went forth from my heart, that her path through life should be guarded from any cause for the fear she seemed with all her heart to despise. I left as her father ended a fresh caution—"Ellen, my dear, I hope no harm will come of your want of care," led the younger sister to the cabin below.

A short time afterwards, while standing near the place appointed by the engineer, watching the movements of the complicated machine, with powerful precision propelling us against wind and tide, some dozen miles an hour, on a sudden the engine was stopped in obedience to the signal bell, and I heard considerable bustle on the deck above. A fishing boat had attempted to cross the track of the steamer, and, to avoid collision, the abrupt stoppage had been deemed necessary by the captain. The fishing boat had passed in safety by, and the steamer was again under full steam. As I walked leisurely to the after part of the boat, I saw a crowd near the ladies' cabin, and, borne in the arms of her father apparently dead, was the young lady whom I had left, and who subsequently became an object of interest to many on board. I hesitated in forcing my way to her, supposing that it might be a case of fainting, and there were enough to apply the remedies on such occasions. After a lapse of some minutes, from the agitated appearance of those who had accompanied the young lady into the cabin, it was evident to me that a serious accident had occurred. I entered the cabin with the captain, and beheld, reclining on a settee, the form of that lovely girl, to all appearance dead, her father and sister bending over her in agony, chafing her temples, pressing her with their hands, calling upon her name in vain, their anguish subsiding in floods of tears. Messengers had been dispatched to different parts of the boat to ascertain if there was among the passengers a surgeon, who could ascertain the nature and extent of the injury. No one had yet been found. I asked how the accident occurred, and was informed that when the boat stopped the young lady was leaning over the rail of the promenade deck; the passengers anxiously rushing to one side to see the fishing boat pass, caused the steamer to careen, when the poor girl fell to the deck below, striking her head upon a corner of the chain box.

A medical gentleman entered the cabin. A young man entered with him. Upon examination, it was found that the skull of the young lady was fractured, and every indication of compression of the brain.—The intelligence was imparted to the unhappy parent of the girl, with the candid acknowledgement that her situation was one of imminent peril. "Can nothing be done to save her?" said the weeping father. The sister had been removed in an almost unconscious state from the cabin, and was in the care of some ladies. The physician replied that there was but one hope to rest upon—an operation, and that skillfully and speedily performed.

"What operation?" asked the father, holding her head in his hands, and waiting a reply in breathless anxiety.

"Trepanning," quietly responded the physician, and briefly explaining his meaning.

A painful silence of some minutes now ensued.

"When this dreadful operation is performed, what is the chance of recovery?" gasped the father, seizing the physician by the arm.

"That must depend upon circumstances," was the reply.

"Save her life. Ellen, my child—my child! Poor girl, 'tis an awful thing to think of. If, as you say, it must be done, for heaven's sake lose no time."

"I have no instrument fit for the purpose, nor would I undertake it if I had. It needs a more experienced hand than mine. I never saw it done. From books only I know its nature and manner of proceeding?"

The captain remarked that he had a case of instruments on board the boat; of their purpose he was ignorant. The young man who had entered with the physician had been carefully examining the injury, and requested the captain to procure the instruments, who left the cabin for that purpose. He then addressed the physician:

"Sir, should the trepan be at hand, would it not be well to attempt the operation? In her present state she must die, unless some aid be promptly given. I will assist you."

"Are you a physician?"

"No; I am a student of medicine only. I have seen the trepan twice used with complete success. I am aware 'tis a dangerous operation, though easily performed."

"I shall not undertake it. I could not summon resolution. I do not profess surgery."

"We are many miles from land, sir, I never performed this or any other operation upon the human body. Relying upon my knowledge of anatomy—the exigency of the case—the favorable position of the wound, I would not shrink in any attempt to save a valuable life. Why should I, sir?"

The captain returned. The case was opened, and proved, upon examination, to be a large case of amputating instruments, and, fortunately, the trepan and its necessary apparatus accompanying them. The father revived from apparent stupor. The sight of the knives made him shudder.

"Well," said he, in a whisper, "what is to be done?"

The young man and the physician were conversing inaudably together for a moment.

"No sir," replied the physician "Nothing in the world would induce me to attempt it. Having no confidence in my own power, you know, sir, it is not likely that I should succeed."

"If you were not on the boat, under the circumstances, and at the request of those interested, I would attempt it. But it is understood that you refuse, and if her father will trust me, I will save her, if I can.—Captain, you know me. I have nought but good motives."

The father had listened. The calm, cool manner of the young student, weighed much in his favor. After a look at his child, who still seemed in the sleep of death, the low, peculiar breathing sound attendant upon such cases, being the only sign of life and sure symptom of the nature of the hurt, he took the young man's hand and said:

"Do what you think best. Save her, if you can. God help you!" He kissed her and walked away, checking his emotion, repeating the prayer for her safety.

A request was made for those whose aid was not necessary, to retire from the cabin, which was, of course complied with. The physician, to his credit be it spoken, remained to assist in an act which he dared not be principal in. The instruments having been carefully arranged, and everything that prudence could suggest attended to, the young lady was placed upon a table to undergo the fearful operation. There was to her no dread. She could feel no pain. Sensation, to her, was a lost faculty. But the loss of self-possession in the operator—a lack of knowledge and judgment in a critical moment, might make of the instrument used to save life a weapon of sure destruction. The physician secured her head in a position the most convenient, the student removed from the injured spot the golden curls, as he took the scalpel in his hand to make the necessary incision through the integuments. 'Twas evident success would attend his efforts. His hand trembled not. In a moment part of the scalp was dissected up—the bone was visible—the saw about to do its work. Such silence—a frightful wound appeared, and though inflicted upon one who felt not the knife, still it called forth a terrible feeling of suspense. But a short time had been occupied by the young operator, when, removing a piece of the skull of a circular form, the brain, with its thousand vessels distended with blood, showed plainly through its covering membrane.

Her father walked about the cabin, not daring to look in the direction in which his child was lying. After various attempts to speak, he turned, saw the blood, necessarily lost, trickling down her livid cheeks, and covering in its course, the loose locks that had been spared.

"Is she alive?" Do not answer me—still I must ask. O, Ellen, Ellen!"

Expressions like these escapes from his lips in tones of heart-sinking despair. No attention was paid to him by the operator, who was proceeding to the last stages of his task, with a firm hand and determined heart as if the instruments were acting on marble. A moment's pause for reflection and consultation, had enabled him to decide upon an important point. Applying a lever to the depressed portion of the skull, it was with some difficulty raised, and signs of returning consciousness were evident. She moved her hands, and raised them to her head.—The eye of the sufferer resumed its natural office, and from her lips came the words of transport:

"Father, I am safe! I am better!"

The transition from death to life, so sudden, was like the charms of the magician's art. Overcome by the change, her father sank in a chair, and was not disturbed till the proper dressings were applied and the operation pronounced complete. The party were soon after landed at a town where I intended to spend some days, and with the young surgeon, I assisted in her removal to the carriage. For days he attended her constantly, and her complete recovery was the result. Is there not something romantic in this?"

"No; it's what might be called an interesting case, and its equal may be found in any of your published lectures by distinguished professors of surgery."

"Well, it's an odd way to be introduced to a wife. You'll allow that, I suppose?"

"Why, yes, one would hardly suppose that cutting a hole in the cranium of a young lady was the way to win her heart."

"It was in this case, at any rate. The fair-haired lady I introduced to you yesterday, the wife of my friend——, you know, who is no doctor, was the heroine of my romance. I had the story from the M. D. who was present on the occasion. And her father has given with her a fortune. That lock of hair you saw braided in the brooch you so much admired in his bosom, was cut from Ellen's head previous to the operation, and which he prizes beyond the jewels that encompass it. Now, what say you to the romance of our profession?"

"Say," yawned the junior M. D., "why, that such things don't happen every day.—Why is not your friend one of us?"

He is, in all but name—possessing the qualities necessary to excel in the practice of the healing art, an honor to society, delighting to do good, enjoying the felicity of domestic life with a companion won from the grave, by the knowledge of a splendid science, and the courageous exercise of its principles Is not his reward the continuation of a true romance?"

THE LOCKS OF TROLHATTA.

Madam Ida Pfeiffer, in her "Journey to Iceland," thus mentions these wonders of the world, on the Gotha river, in Sweden, where the falls of Trolhatta are passed by a canal:

At Lilla Edet we came to the first lock, of which there are five at this place, and while the boat was passing through them, we had an opportunity of seeing the falls of the Gotha, which are broad and full, though rather low.

The canal then sweeps for some distance behind the fall, and is either dug through the rock or confined within stone walls The scenery around Akerstrom resembles a beautiful park; the valley is narrowed by fine hills, and the stream occupies its whole width, barely allowing space enough for a few little paths leading through the fir-woods which skirt the shores

In the afternoon we reached the celebrated locks of Trolhatta, a magnificent work, well worthy of the most powerful nations, and much beyond what one would expect from a country like Sweden. The eleven locks rise by gradations to the hight of a hundred and twelve feet in the distance of three thousand five hundred feet. Their channel is wide and deep, dug through the rock, and paved with flags; they rise like the solitary steps of a gigantic stairway, under which name they might take their place among the wonders of the world.—Each lock is closed by a heavy gate, while the boat is slowly lifted to the level of the next. The scenery around is wild and romantic.

As soon as we arrived at this spot, we were assailed by a crowd of boys, who offered themselves as guides to conduct us to the Falls of Trolhatta. There is ample time for this excursion, as the steamer is detained here four hours, and it can be accomplished with ease in two. But the traveller should first take a bird's-eye view of the locks from a pavillion standing on a high rock which overlooks them all.

The road through the woods to Trolhatta is exceedingly pretty, and the village itself is beautifully situated in a lovely valley, surrounded by hills and woodland, on the bank of the river, whose white and foaming waters are strongly contrasted with its dark fringe of evergreens. The canal is only partially visible from this point, the last locks being concealed behind a small group of rocks; and it was not without astonishment that we saw first the masts and then the boat itself appear above them, as if it were shoved into our sight by invisible hands.

GOOD HABITS.—There are four good habits—punctuality, accuracy, steadiness, and dispatch. Without the first of these, time is wasted; without the second, mistakes the most hurtful to your own interest, and that of others, may be committed; without the third, nothing can well be done; and without the fourth, opportunities of great advantages are lost, which it is impossible to recall.

A NEW HAIR OIL.

Dave and Robert, two young men, noted for their careful toilets, boarded at a house where the servant girls take their share of hair oils, tooth washes, and use the hair brushes and cologne water regardless of expense. The young men, rooming together, were in the habit of getting a pint of hair oil made up by the druggist at a time, and finally they were in the habit of finding that a pint of this costly hair oil wouldn't last a week, and that all the servant girls in the house emitted the same perfume that they did, It was not long before they came to a conclusion in the matter. So one evening, when the hair oil cruise was empty, they took the bottle which contained it, and straight they went to the drug store. There was a clerk, and a mixture of various articles in a pint bottle, and the following was marked on the prescription book as the contents:

"Of lac assefœtida, which, for the information of our readers we will state, is a highly concentrated extract of that delicious drug—of this one ounce.

"Of liquor potasse, (a fluid celebrated for its corrosive quality, having the power of taking the hair off a dog in ten seconds,) half an ounce.

"Of balsam fir, (the stickiest and gumiest article known,) one ounce.

"Of alcohol, to make the ingredients fluid, half a pint."

This was well "shuck," and deposited in the usual place occupied by the hair oil.—The next day (Sunday), Dave and Bob dressed themselves for church, and after finishing, travelled down stairs. But they came up another way in a few minutes, and secreted themselves in a room adjoining theirs, where they could see everything that went on. After the people of the house had gone, two or three servant girls came into Dave's room.

"Whist, Molly," said a large, red-headed one, "Misther Dave has more of the ile, and my hair is as dhry as powdher; let's have a regular fix up wid the folks all away."

This was acceded to, and they all went to oiling their locks, being very lavish of the fluid, which was quite thin, in consequence of the alcohol. In a few minutes red head says:

"Whirri, what smils so?" with her nose turned skyward.

"Sure its the parfume," interrupted a short and dumpy specimen with her hair down her back.

"Parfume, indade," says the red head, "that's not parfume, it's the rale bad smell."

"Mebby," says the dumpy, "its the Patch Chewley. I've heard folks say that Patch Chewley smills dreadful at fust; a person must get used to the smill before they likes it. Sure it's a parfume used by the quality."

This satisfied red-head, and after a thorough "ileing" they left the room. In about two hours the boarders came home from church.

"Good gracious, what is it? Bless my soul, Mr. G., I shall faint! Oh, my dear, there must be an unclean animal in the room!" and a thousand other expressions were heard, as the boarders got a sniff at the "Patch Chewley," when they entered the house. The master and mistress of the house were puzzled, confounded, indignant, and in vain endeavored to discover the locality of the smell. At dinner time there were not a dozen boarders at the table, and those that were there rapidly thinking of backing out, as the three girls who were "iled" were waiting on them

Finally dinner was given up, and with doors and windows opened, the inmates alternately froze and suffocated. The day was a dire one to them, but it soon wore away.

At night the three girls attempted to comb their hair. The alcohol had evaporated, leaving the balsam of fir and honey, and they might as well have attempted to comb a bunch of shingles. At the first dash that red-head made, her comb caught, and influenced by the potasse at the roots, the whole mass of the front hair came off red-head's cranium, which she discovered with a yell that would have made a cannibal envious. The same result attended the rest of the hair, with the exception of enough to do up as a scalp-lock, to ornament with feathers, in Indian style. The two other girls met the same fate, and about ten o'clock that night they might have been seen wrapping up their lost "Patch Chewley" locks in pieces of paper. The next morning they were informed by the mistress that she did not desire to employ bald-headed servant-girls, and with their "chists" they departed in almost a scalped condition.

The discovery of Dave and Bob's connection with the transaction was not known till lately, but their toilet articles since then have been as sacred from touch as the tomb of Palastine.

TRUE COURAGE.—For a man to say that his soul is incapable of fear, is just as absurd as to say that, from a peculiarity of constitution, when dipped in water, he does not get wet. You, human beings, whoever you may be, when you are placed in danger and reflect upon the fact, you feel afraid. Don't vapor and say no—we know how the mental machine must work, unless it be diseased. Now the thoughtful man admits that a bullet through his brain would be a very serious thing for himself, and likewise for his wife and children—he admits he shrinks from such a prospect—he will take pains to protect himself from the risk, but he says that if duty requires him to run the risk, he will run it. This is the courage of the civilized man, as opposed to the blind, bull-dog insensibility of the savage. This is courage—to know the existence of danger, but to face it nevertheless.

A Good Rule.

As regards unmannerly and unmanageable children at the table, there is one simple rule—it is this. If a child does not come quietly and take his proper place, and there wait till he is helped, and then if he should not be satisfied with what he is helped to, in ordinary circumstances; indeed, should he behave in any way such as would put you to blush—with company—send him away immediately. Do not threaten as the majarity of parents do. "You shall leave the table if you don't behave better. I tell you, you shall." What cares he? He knows it is nothing but breath; he has heard the threat ever since he can remember. No; let the rule be understood and established; let it be enacted on as instantaneously as the report follows the flash of the gun, only with perfect gentleness, as well as decision, on our part. There should be no harshness of voice, no roughness of hand—indeed, there will be no need of it, if such shall be the well understood rule.—It may be said that the child, by some inadvertance, may make an unintentional mistake. Very well; then the certain penalty will prevent future carelessness.—*Rev. Warren Burton.*

A BEAUTIFUL IDEA.—In the mountains of Tyrol it is the custom of the women and children to come out when it is dedtime and sing their national songs until they hear their husbands, fathers and brothers answer them from the hills on their return home. On the shores of the Adriatic such a custom prevails. There the wives of the fishermen come down and sing a melody. After singing the first stanzas they listened awhile for an answering melody from off the water; and to sing and listen till the well-known voice comes borne on the waters, telling that the loved one is almost home. How sweet to the weary fisherman, as the shadows gather around him, must be the song of the loved ones at home, that sing to cheer him; and how they must strengthen and tighten the links that bind together these humble dwellers by the sea! Truly it is among the lowly in this life that we find some of the most beautiful customs in practice.

NO CHURCH.—A lawyer built himself an office in the form of a hexagon, or six square. The novelty of the structure attracted the attention of some Irishmen who were passing by; they made a full stop and viewed the building very critically. The lawyer, somewhat disgusted at their curiosity, lifted up the window, put his head out, and addressed them:

"Why do you stand there like a pack of blockheads, gazing at my office? Do you take it for a church?"

"Faix," answered one of them, "I was thinking so till I saw the divil poke his head out of the windy!"

☞"Mr. Jones, have you got a match?" "Yes, sir, a match for the old boy. There she is, mixing dough." Jones pointed to his wife and then slid from the front door. The last we saw of Jones he was "kiting" it down the road, hotly pursued by a red-headed lady with a cistern pole. Poor Jones!

☞Bullets can sing and whistle, but they are not pleasant musicians.

A MONTH WITH THE REBELS.

Blackwood's Magazine for December has a paper entitled as above, which will be read with interest as the testimony of a recent visitor to the Southern theatre of war. The writer's sympathies are evidently with the Southern chivalry, but there is no violence in his style. He begins by admitting that Kentucky is not altogether Secessionist.—Her Legislature is still strong for the Union. Whole counties are the same. Distinguished men, opposed to the Government, still adhere to the stars and stripes. The mature and honored judgment of the venerable Crittenden is yet against "the rebels;" but where are Morehead, Buckner, Preston, Breckinridge? The following extracts may not be unacceptable to our readers.—*Wilmer and Smith's European Times.*

SPECIMEN OF SOUTHERN SPIRIT.

"Our party at the little inn broke up on the arrival of a train, and we found standing room in a car crowded with soldiers.—Few were dressed in uniform, but all were well armed. One beside us, not a bad sample of the rest, had a breach-loading carbine slung over his shoulder, two revolvers in one side of his belt, and a bowie knife in the other. What a contrast these men presented to the soldiers we had hitherto seen!—Determination and reckless daring marked every feature and gesture 'Do you think the Yankee are going to whip us, sir?' inquired our friend, looking like an infernal walking machine. 'Well, they have a fine army, and will do their best, I think.' 'Don't care, sir; they can't do it. If they beat us in the field, we'll take to the woods, and shoot them down like squirrels. Look here, sir; see what they have done to me. I am a shoemaker by trade. They tried to arrest me in Elizabeth Town; I got away, but they took my wife; so by ——, I'll take five-and-twenty Yankee scalps, or they shall have mine?'

"Being disappointed in finding any of that Union feeling in the south of Kentucky of which we had heard so much in New York, we proceeded to Nashville, in Tennessee. More camps, more soldiers, more drilling. Men women and children think of nothing but the war. Fathers of large families are frequently seen serving in the ranks as privates, side by side with their sons. Ladies make soldiers coats and trousers, while children knit their stockings.—Trade is in a great measure at a stand-still; but the rapidity with which the people, hitherto dependent upon the North for every manufactured article, however simple, are beginning to supply their wants for themselves, receives at Nashville a curious exemplification. A few weeks ago, a boy discovered a method of making percussion caps, which the army was then much in need of. A factory was forthwith established, that now turns out some millions per week;

SOUTHERN CREED ABOUT COTTON.

"The Government have not prohibited the export of cotton, except to the Northern States; but self-constituted authorities have, in more than one instance that we know of, made it impossible for ships to load which had run the blockade, and whose owners were desirous of doing so again. The popular feeling which has dictated these violent acts is caused, first, by the desire that the North should be made to suffer for enforcing the blockade, and the apprehension that, if cotton were to be allowed to leave the country, Massachusetts would manage to obtain it; and secondly, by the impression that in laying a general embargo they would incline European Governments to recognize the Confederacy. Amongst the enlightened this latter motive was always repudiated; but there can be no doubt that the prevalent conviction throughout the South is that England cannot do without the King; that all cotton, except American, is either too short or too long; and that the medium is the only staple which Manchester cares to have.

"In vain we would tell them that our manufacturers would soon change their machinery, and adapt it to the necessities of the times; that our Government was making great exertions to procure cotton from India and Africa; that it was our interest to foster our own colonies, and to produce it there if possible; and that the longer we were deprived of America as a market, the more strenuous would our efforts be to render ourselves independent of it. But it was of no use; they were ineradicably impressed with the conviction that they can command the market at any time; and that the distance from England at which its rival is placed must always give the Confederacy a great advantage.

COMPOSITION AND SUPPLIES OF THE SOUTHERN ARMY.

"Numbers of wealthy planters serve as privates side by side with the professional man, the shop-keeper, the clerk, the laborer; and all go through the ordinary fatigue duties incident to camp life We saw a [illegible] because his master, on being told off to dig a trench round a battery, would not allow him to 'lend a hand.' 'Twill nebber do, massa,' he said; 'I go 'tarnal mad wid dem darn'd Yankees.' One day we heard a lad boasting to one of a different regiment of the number of gentlemen in his company who had thousands of dollars at their command. The latter replied, 'Oh, of course they fight; but we have some in ours who have not got a cent.' The Washington Artillery, comprising many batteries, is composed of the best blood in New Orleans. The gunners, dressed in light blue uniforms, are all men of independent means. General Beauregard's son, for instance, left his father's staff and entered as a private. The drivers are regularly enlisted into the army, and paid by the regiment; so here is a force which does not cost the country a single farthing. Their efficiency is undoubted, and the execution which they did at Bull Run has led to their material augmentation, and the formation of others on similar principles. From the same city comes a very different regiment, called the New Orleans 'Zouaves,' dressed in red caps, blue braided jackets, and trousers striped with light grey and red. These men look like pirates—bearded, fierce-looking fellows—

Theirs to believe no prey, no plan amiss.

Apparently, at least; for as they marched past the General with a long, swinging step, singing a wild martial air, we thought they were as formidable a body of men as we should care to see. The drill of the army is the same as the French, the step even quicker than the Zouaves, and a deal longer than that of the English infantry. Movements are executed with considerable precision, and as rapidly as in English light infantry. From the reports we had heard in the North, we expected to find ragged and half-clad regiments; instead of which, we failed, during many rides through the various camps, to see one man who was not clad in serviceable attire. It was expected that winter clothing would be served out before the first of November, and that dress would then become more uniform. But the point to which the chief attention of officers and men is directed is the arms. Besides the Enfield rifle, most of the privates in the army carry at least one revolver and a bowie knife; these are invariably kept bright and in good condition; and the early training which all the Southerners undergo in shooting squirrels as soon as they are able to handle a gun, gives them a facility of using their weapons and a correctness of aim that renders their fire unusually formidable.

"The commissariat seemed to be most efficiently administered. A large depot of breadstuffs is placed in a convenient position, whence the different corps are supplied in wagons drawn by four horses, one of which a negro generally rides. The resources of the country produce the fresh meat necessary for the enormous daily consumption, and we frequently saw scores of cattle and sheep driven along the roads, from the condition of which it was evident their journey had not been long. Indeed, a country gentleman informed us that there were animals enough in two countries of Virginia adjacent to the seat of war to last the army for two years."