Short Stories and Selections for Use in the Secondary School

Emilie Kip Baker

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SHORT STORIES AND SELECTIONS
FOR USE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
COMPILED AND ANNOTATED, WITH QUESTIONS FOR STUDY
BY
EMILIE KIP BAKER

[Illustration: Walter Scott's Library at Abbotsford]

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INTRODUCTION

The testimony of librarians as to the kind of books people are reading nowadays is somewhat discouraging to the book−lover who has been brought up in the old traditions. We are told that Scott and Thackeray and George Eliot cannot compete with the year's “best sellers,” and that the old classics are read only by the few who have a cultivated taste and a trained intelligence.

The interest of novelty, the dislike of mental effort, the temptation to read merely for a mild sensation,—all these undoubtedly tend to keep down the level of literary taste. To many readers of good average ability, neither the esthetic nor the purely intellectual makes a strong appeal. Even minds of fine quality often find a welcome diversion in trivial reading. In fact, to expect every one and at all times to have his mind keyed up to the higher levels is neither sincere nor reasonable. And yet, making due allowance for intellectual limitations, for the busy and distracting conditions of modern life, and for the real need of light reading at times when recreation is of more value than instruction, it would seem that a fair proportion of our reading could and should be on a higher plane.

To put it on this high plane is one of the fixed objects of the school. For this end the schools have given English an important place, have broadened the list of recommended books year by year, and have sought to improve the method of teaching literature. Especially have they hoped to create in the pupil the habit of reading good books and of discovering new material on his own initiative. Thus far their success has fallen much below their hopes, as the testimony of librarians, adduced above, plainly indicates.

There is one significant fact which both librarians and teachers have observed. The average reader, child or adult, seldom knows how or where to find things to read. He is lost in a library, whether among the book−shelves or at a card−catalogue. He is like a traveler who is ignorant of the geography of the country and cannot use the compass. And worse still, he has not the explorer's instinct. If he possessed this, he would somehow find his way himself,—a thing which occasionally happens when the reader has more than usual ability. Between the covers of those books, turning to him their uncommunicative backs, behind those labels—to him so unexpressive—there may be passages, whole chapters or more, that would give him entertainment, if he only knew!

To introduce him to an author may be to give him a new friend. Introductions need not imply long and intimate companionship. This author may hold him for half an hour, and never again; that one may claim his attention for a day; and another may come to rank as one of his old friends. In each case the acquaintance may depend upon the fact of an introduction, and not upon the reader's own initiative in discovery. More than the acquaintances thus made, is the sense of at−homeness among books which they gradually bring about. We all know that feeling of the unreality of a book of which we have merely heard the title, and how soon we forget it. A book that we have seen and handled, however, and especially one which we have read or from which we have seen a passage quoted in another volume, is somehow real,—an entity. Through continued experiences of this sort we come to feel really acquainted with books, to know where to find the things we are looking for, to judge and appreciate,—in brief, to feel at home among them.

It is as a series of such introductions to the larger world of literature that this volume has been compiled. Some of the selections are from books whose titles are already familiar to high school students; many others are from sources that few pupils will know. All of them, it is confidently believed, are within the interest and comprehension of boys and girls of high school age. The notes and questions at the end of each selection will, it is hoped, be of some help to the students in getting at the author's meaning, and in suggesting interesting topics for discussion. If, after finishing the Short Stories and Selections, a few more students will have formed the habit of good reading and will feel, not merely willing, but eager, to enlarge their acquaintance among good books, this volume has accomplished its purpose.

EMILIE K. BAKER

SHORT STORIES AND SELECTIONS

A LEAF IN THE STORM

Bernadou clung to his home with a dogged devotion. He would not go from it to fight unless compelled, but for it he would have fought like a lion. His love for his country was only an indefinite shadowy existence that was not clear to him; he could not save a land that he had never seen, a capital that was only to him as an empty name; nor could he comprehend the danger that his nation ran; nor could he desire to go forth and spend his lifeblood in defence of things unknown to him. He was only a peasant, and he could not read nor greatly understand. But affection for his birthplace was a passion with him,—mute indeed, but deep−seated as an oak. For his birthplace he would have struggled as a man can struggle only when supreme love as well as duty nerves his arm. Neither he nor Reine Allix could see that a man's duty might lie from home, but in that home both were alike ready to dare anything and to suffer everything. It was a narrow form of patriotism, yet it had nobleness, endurance, and patience in it; in song it has been oftentimes deified as heroism, but in modern warfare it is punished as the blackest crime.

So Bernadou tarried in his cottage till he should be called, keeping watch by night over the safety of his village and by day doing all he could to aid the deserted wives and mothers of the place by tilling their ground for them and by tending such poor cattle as were left in their desolate fields. He and Margot and Reine Allix, between them, fed many mouths that would otherwise have been closed in death by famine, and denied themselves all except the barest and most meagre subsistence, that they might give away the little they possessed.

And all this while the war went on, but seemed far from them, so seldom did any tidings of it pierce the seclusion in which they dwelt. By and by, as the autumn went on, they learned a little more. Fugitives coming to the smithy for a horse's shoe; women fleeing to their old village homes from their light, gay life in the city; mandates from the government of defence sent to every hamlet in the country; stray news−sheets brought in by carriers or hawkers and hucksters,—all these by degrees told them of the peril of their country,—vaguely, indeed, and seldom truthfully, but so that by mutilated rumors they came at last to know the awful facts of the fate of Sedan, the fall of the Empire, the siege of Paris. It did not alter their daily lives: it was still too far off and too impalpable. But a foreboding, a dread, an unspeakable woe settled down on them. Already their lands and cattle had been harassed to yield provision for the army and large towns; already their best horses had been taken for the siege−trains and the forage−wagons; already their ploughshares were perforce idle, and their children cried because of the scarcity of nourishment; already the iron of war had entered into their souls.

The little street at evening was mournful and very silent: the few who talked spoke in whispers, lest a spy should hear them, and the young ones had no strength to play: they wanted food.

Bernadou, now that all means of defence was gone from him, and the only thing left to him to deal with was his own life, had become quiet and silent and passionless, as was his habit. He would have fought like a mastiff for his home, but this they had forbidden him to do, and he was passive and without hope. He closed his door, and sat down with his hand in that of Reine Allix and his arm around his wife. “There is nothing to do but wait” he said sadly. The day seemed very long in coming.

The firing (which had come nearer each day) ceased for a while; then its roll commenced afresh, and grew still nearer to the village. Then again all was still.

At noon a shepherd staggered into the place, pale, bleeding, bruised, covered with mire. The Prussians, he told them, had forced him to be their guide, had knotted him tight to a trooper's saddle, and had dragged him with them until he was half dead with fatigue and pain. At night he had broken from them and had fled: they were close at hand, he said, and had burned the town from end to end because a man had fired at them from a house−top. That was all he knew. Bernadou, who had gone out to hear his news, returned into the house and sat down and hid his face within his hands.

It grew dark. The autumn day died. The sullen clouds dropped scattered rain. The red leaves were blown in millions by the wind. The little houses on either side the road were dark, for the dwellers in them dared not show any light that might be a star to allure to them the footsteps of their foes. Bernadou sat with his arms on the table, and his head resting on them. Margot nursed her son: Reine Allix prayed.

Suddenly in the street without there was the sound of many feet of horses and of men, the shouting of angry

voices, the splashing of quick steps in the watery ways, the screams of women, the flash of steel through the gloom. Bernadou sprang to his feet, his face pale, his blue eyes dark as night. “They are come!” he said under his breath. It was not fear that he felt, nor horror: it was rather a passion of love for his birthplace and his nation,—a passion of longing to struggle and to die for both. And he had no weapon!

He drew his house−door open with a steady hand, and stood on his own threshold and faced these, his enemies. The street was full of them,—some mounted, some on foots crowds of them swarmed in the woods on the roads. They had settled on the village as vultures on a dead lamb's body. It was a little, lowly place: it might well have been left in peace. It had had no more share in the war than a child still unborn, but it came in the victor's way, and his mailed heel crushed it as he passed. They had heard that arms were hidden and francs−tireurs sheltered there, and they had swooped down on it and held it hard and fast. Some were told off to search the chapel; some to ransack the dwellings; some to seize such food and bring such cattle as there might be left; some to seek out the devious paths that crossed and recrossed the field; and yet there still remained in the little street hundreds of armed men, force enough to awe a citadel or storm a breach.

The people did not attempt to resist. They stood passive, dry−eyed in misery, looking on whilst the little treasures of their household lives were swept away forever, and ignorant what fate by fire or iron might be their portion ere the night was done. They saw the corn that was their winter store to save their offspring from famine poured out like ditch−water. They saw oats and wheat flung down to be trodden into a slough of mud and filth. They saw the walnut presses in their kitchens broken open, and their old heirlooms of silver, centuries old, borne away as booty. They saw the oak cupboard in their wives' bedchambers ransacked, and the homespun linen and the quaint bits of plate that had formed their nuptial dowers cast aside in derision or trampled into a battered heap. They saw the pet lamb of their infants, the silver earrings of their brides, the brave tankards they had drunk their marriage wine in, the tame bird that flew to their whistle, all seized for food or spoil. They saw all this, and had to stand by with mute tongues and passive hands, lest any glance of wrath or gesture of revenge should bring the leaden bullets in their children's throats or the yellow flame amidst their homesteads. Greater agony the world cannot hold.

—LOUISE DE LA RAMEE (Ouida).

[Footnote: This extract is taken from a story by the same title. The chief characters are the peasant Bernadou, his wife Margot, and his old grandmother Reine Allix. The scene is laid during the Franco−Prussian War of 1870. The great defeat of the French at Sedan, and the surrender of Paris from starvation after a long siege brought the war to an end. The victorious Prussians took from France an indemnity of five billion francs ($1,000,000,000), and two of their richest provinces, Alsace and Lorraine.

What words in the first sentence show that it is not the beginning of the story? Note the repeated use of antithesis (contrast) in the first paragraph. By what details do you learn the state of the country? How did the war affect even the people remote from the battlefields? How are the terror and suffering of the people indicated? Notice the effectiveness of the author's use of details. Have you read any prose or poetry in which war is made to seem glorious? How does it seem here? Does the author make the scene of the arrival of the Prussians vivid? How is this done? Note the dramatic contrast between the arrival of the Prussians and the actions of the peasants. How has the author drawn the character of Bernadou? By what details does the author give special poignancy to the pathos of her account? What is the significance of the title “A Leaf in the Storm”?]

CATS

There was once a man in Italy—so the story runs—who said that animals were sacred because God had made them. People didn't believe him for a long time; they came, you see, of a race which had found it amusing to kill such things, and killed a great many of them too, until it struck them one fine day that killing men was better sport still, and watching men kill each other the best sport of all because it was the least trouble. Animals said they, why, how can they be sacred; things that you call beef and mutton when they have left off being oxen and sheep, and sell for so much a pound? They scoffed at this mad neighbour, looked at each other waggishly and shrugged their shoulders as he passed along the street. Well! then, all of a sudden, as you may say, one morning he walked into the town—Gubbio it was—with a wolf pacing at his heels—a certain wolf which had been the terror of the country−side and eaten I don't know how many children and goats. He walked up the main street till he got to the open Piazza in front of the great church. And the long grey wolf padded beside him with a limp tongue lolling out between the ragged palings which stood him for teeth. In the middle of the Piazza was a fountain, and above the fountain a tall stone crucifix. Our friend mounted the steps of the cross in the alert way he had (like a little bird, the story says) and the wolf, after lapping apologetically in the basin, followed him up three steps at a time. Then with one arm around the shaft to steady himself, he made a fine sermon to the neighbours crowding in the Square, and the wolf stood with his fore−paws on the edge of the fountain and helped him. The sermon was all about wolves (naturally) and the best way of treating them. I fancy the people came to agree with it in time; anyhow when the man died they made a saint of him and built three churches, one over another, to contain his body. And I believe it is entirely his fault that there are a hundred−and−three cats in the convent−garden of San Lorenzo in Florence. For what are you to do? Animals are sacred, says Saint Francis. Animals are sacred, but cats have kittens; and so it comes about that the people who agree with Saint Francis have to suffer for the people who don't.

The Canons of San Lorenzo agree with Saint Francis, and it seems to me that they must suffer a good deal. The convent is large; it has a great mildewed cloister with a covered−in walk all around it built on arches. In the middle is a green garth [Footnote: Garth: an inclosure, a yard.] with cypresses and yews dotted about; and when you look up you see the blue sky cut square, and the hot tiles of a huge dome staring up into it. Round the cloister walk are discreet brown doors, and by the side of each door a brass plate tells you the name and titles of the Canon who lives behind it. It is on the principle of Dean's yard at Westminster; only here there are more Canons—and more cats.

The Canons live under the cloister; the cats live on the green garth, and sometimes die there. I did not see much of the Canons; but the cats seemed to me very sad—depressed, nostalgic even, might describe them, if there had not been something more languid, something faded and spiritless about their habit. It was not that they quarrelled. I heard none of those long−drawn wails, gloomy yet mellow soliloquies, with which our cats usher in the crescent moon or hymn her when she swims at the full: there lacked even that comely resignation we may see on any sunny window−ledge at home;—the rounded back and neatly ordered tail, the immaculate fore−paws peering sedately below the snowy chest, the squeezed−up eyes which so resolutely shut off a bleak and (so to say) unenlightened world. That is pensiveness, sedate chastened melancholy; but it is soothing, it speaks a philosophy, and a certain balancing of pleasures and pains. In San Lorenzo cloister, when I looked in one hot noon seeking a refuge from the glare and white dust of the city, I was conscious of a something sinister that forbade such an even existence for the smoothest tempered cat. There were too many of them for companionship and perhaps too few for the humour of the thing to strike them: in and out the chilly shades they stalked gloomily, hither and thither like lank and unquiet ghosts of starved cats. They were of all colours—gay orange−tawny, tortoise shell with the becoming white patch over one eye, delicate tints of grey and fawn and lavender, brindle, glossy sable; and yet the gloom and dampness of the place seemed to mildew them all so that their brightness was glaring and their softest gradations took on a shade as of rusty mourning. No cat could be expected to do herself justice.

To and fro they paced, balancing sometimes with hysterical precision [Footnote: Hysterical precision. What does this mean?] on the ledge of the parapet, passing each other at whisker's length, but cutting each other dead. [Footnote: Cutting each other dead. Have you ever thought of the quaint absurdity of this figurative expression?]

Not a cat had a look or a sniff for his fellow; not a cat so much as guessed at another's existence. Among those hundred−and−three restless Spirits there was not a cat that did not affect to believe that a hundred−and−two were away! It was horrible, the inhumanity of it. Here were these shreds and waifs, these “unnecessary litters” of Florentine households, herded together in the only asylum (short of the Arno [Footnote: Arno: the river that flows through Florence.]) open to them, driven in like dead leaves in November, flitting dismally round and round for a span, and watching each other die without a mew or a lick! Saint Francis was not the wise man I had thought him. [Footnote: St. Francis not the wise man, etc. Why not?]

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. I had watched these beasts at their feverish exercises for nearly an hour before I perceived that they were gradually hemming me in. They seemed to be forming up, in ranks, on the garth. Only a ditch separated us—I was in the cloister−walk, a hundred−and−three gaunt, expectant, desperate cats facing me. Their famished pale eyes pierced me through and through; and two−hundred− and−two hungry eyes (four cats supported life on one apiece) is more than I can stand, though I am a married man with a family. These brutes thought I was going to feed them! I was preparing weakly for flight when I heard steps in the gateway; a woman came in with a black bag. She must be going to deposit a cat on Jean−Jacques [Footnote: Jean Jacques Rousseau: a French philosophical writer of the last part of the eighteenth century. His chief works are “Emile,” “Social Contract,” “Confessions.”] ingenious plan of avoiding domestic trouble; it was surely impossible she wanted to borrow one! Neither: she came confidently in, beaming on our mad fellowship with a pleasant smile of preparation. The cats knew her better than I did. Their suspense was really shocking to witness. While she was rolling her sleeves up and tying on her apron—she was poor, evidently, but very neat and wholesome in her black dress and the decent cap which crowned her hair—while she unpacked the contents of the bag—two newspaper parcels full of rather distressing viands, scissors, and a pair of gloves which had done duty more than once,—while all these preparations were soberly fulfilling, the agitation of the hundred−and−three was desperate indeed. The air grew thick, it quivered with the lashing of tails; hoarse mews echoed along the stone walls, paws were raised and let fall with the rhythmical patter of raindrops. A furtive beast played the thief: he was one of the one−eyed fraternity, red with mange. Somehow he slipped in between us; we discovered him crouched by the newspaper raking over the contents. This was no time for ceremony; he got a prompt cuff over the head and slunk away shivering and shaking his ears. And then the distribution began. Now, your cat, at the best of times, is squeamish about his food; he stands no tricks. He is a slow eater, though he can secure his dinner with the best of us. A vicious snatch, like a snake, and he has it. Then he spreads himself out to dispose of the prey—feet tucked well in, head low, tail laid close along, eyes shut fast. That is how a cat of breeding loves to dine. Alas! many a day of intolerable prowling, many a black vigil, had taken the polish off the hundred−and−three. As a matter of fact they behaved abominably; they leaped at the scraps, they clawed at them in the air, they bolted them whole with staring eyes and portentous gulpings, they growled all the while with the smothered ferocity of thunder in the hills. No waiting of turns, no licking of lips and moustaches to get the lingering flavors, no dalliance. They were as restless and suspicious here as everywhere; their feast was the horrid hasty orgy of ghouls in a church−yard. But an even distribution was made: I don't think any one got more than his share. Of course there were underhand attempts in plenty and, at least once, open violence—a sudden rush from opposite sides, a growling and spitting like sparks from a smithy; and then, with ears laid flat, two ill−favoured beasts clawed blindly at each other, and a sly and tigerish brindle made away with the morsel. My woman took the thing very coolly I thought, served them all alike, and didn't resent (as I should have done) the unfortunate want of delicacy there was about these vagrants. A cat that takes your food and growls at you for the favor, a cat that would eat you if he dared, is a pretty revelation. *Ca donne furieusement a penser.* [Footnote: Ca donne furieusement a penser: “That makes one think very hard.”] It gives you a suspicion of just how far the polish we most of us smirk over will go. My cats at San Lorenzo knew some few moments of peace between two and three in the afternoon. That would have been the time to get up a testimonial to the kind soul who fed them. Try them at five and they would ignore you. But try them next morning!

My knowledge of the Italian tongue, in those days, was severely limited to the necessaries of existence; to try me on a fancy subject, like cats, was to strike me dumb. But at this stage of our intercourse (hitherto confined to smiles and eye−service) it became so evident my companion had something to say that I must perforce take my hat off and stand attentive. She pointed to the middle of the garth, and there, under the boughs of a shrub, I saw the hundred−and−fourth cat, sorriest of them all. It was a newcomer she told me, and shy. Shy it certainly was,

poor wretch; it glowered upon me from under the branches like a bad conscience. Shyness could not hide hunger—I never saw hungrier eyes than hers—but it could hold it in check: the silkiest speech could not tempt her out, and when we threw pieces she only winced! What was to be done next was my work. Plain duty called me to scale the ditch with some of those dripping, slippery, nameless cates [Footnote: Cates: viands; things to eat. Why "slippery"? Nameless. What are they called in the third sentence from the end of the paragraph?] in my fingers and to approach the stranger where she lurked bodeful under her tree. My passage toward her lay over the rank vegetation of the garth, in whose coarse herbage here and there I stumbled upon a limp white form stretched out—a waif the less in the world! I don't say it was a happy passage for me: it was made to the visible consternation of her I wished to befriend. Her piteous yellow eyes searched mine for sympathy; she wanted to tell me something and I wouldn't understand! As I neared her she shivered and mewed twice. Then she limped painfully off—poor soul, she had but three feet!—to another tree, leaving behind her, unwillingly enough, a much−licked dead kitten. That was what she wanted to tell, then. As I was there, I deposited the garbage by the side of the little corpse, knowing she would resume her watch, and retired. My friend who had put up her parcels was prepared to go. She thanked me with a smile as she went out, looking carefully round lest she had missed out some other night−birds.

One of the Canons had come out of his door and was leaning against the lintel, thoughtfully rubbing his chin. He was a spare dry man who seemed to have measured life and found it childish business. He jerked his head toward the gateway as he glanced at me. "That is a good woman," he said in French, "she lendeth unto the Lord.... Yes," he went on, nodding his head slowly backwards and forwards, "lends Him something every day." The cats were sitting in the shady cloister−garth licking their whiskers: one was actually cleaning his paw. I went out into the sun thinking of Saint Francis and his wolf.

[Footnote: St. Francis was born in 1182 in the little town of Assissi, Italy. He came of a rich and noble family, and was taken into business partnership with his father, a wealthy merchant, at the age of fourteen. In his twenty−fourth year he suddenly abandoned his friends and work, and took up a life of penance and utter poverty. His austerities, his sincerity, and his simple eloquence attracted much attention, and he soon had many followers. Later on he founded the Franciscan Order of monks, and did much missionary work by traveling in the East. He died at Assissi in 1226.]

—MAURICE HEWLETT.

[Footnote: What reference in the first sentence to the sports in the arena of Rome?

Notice how many times the author refers to the number of cats. Why?

Is the description of the scene objective or subjective? Cf. "A Leaf in the Storm."

Notice the suggestiveness of the adjectives as in the reference to "Discrete brown doors" on page 7.

How do these cats differ from cats as you know them? What qualities have they that you recognize? Where does the author indicate that he is about to begin a story? Does the author win your sympathy for the cats? How? In what does the humor of the story lie? What is the climax of the story? What do you think of the priest and his comment? Does the whole sketch interest you because it describes a strange scene, or because it raises the question of the humanity of keeping alive one hundred and three cats?]

AN ADVENTURE

During the expedition to Upper Egypt under General Desaix, a Provencal [Footnote: Provencal. Provence was an ancient government of southeastern France. It became part of the crown lands in 1481 under Louis XI. The term Provencals is used loosely to include dwellers in the south of France.] soldier, who had fallen into the clutches of the Maugrabins, was marched by these marauders, these tireless Arabs, into the deserts lying beyond the cataracts of the Nile.

So as to put a sufficient distance between themselves and the French army, to insure their greater safety, the Maugrabins [Footnote: Maugrabins: a savage tribe of northern Africa.] made forced marches and rested only during the night. They then encamped around a well shaded by palm−trees, under which they had previously concealed a store of provisions. Never dreaming that their prisoner would think of escaping, they satisfied themselves by merely tying his hands, then lay down to sleep, after having regaled themselves with a few dates and given provender to their horses.

When the courageous Provencal noted that they slept soundly and could no longer watch his movements, he made use of his teeth to steal a scimitar, [Footnote: Scimitar: a short Turkish sword, carbine: a short light rifle.] steadied the blade between his knees, cut through the thongs which bound his hands; in an instant he was free. He at once seized a carbine and a long dirk, [Footnote: Dirk: a dagger.] then took the precaution of providing himself with a stock of dried dates, a small bag of oats, some powder and bullets, and hung a scimitar around his waist, mounted one of the horses and spurred on in the direction in which he supposed the French army to be. So impatient was he to see a bivouac [Footnote: Bivouac: an encampment without tents.] again that he pressed on the already tired courser at such a speed that its flanks were lacerated with the spurs, and soon the poor animal, utterly exhausted, fell dead, leaving the Frenchman alone in the midst of the desert.

After walking for a long time in the sand, with all the courage and firmness of an escaped convict, the soldier was obliged to stop, as the day had already come to an end. Despite the beauty of an Oriental night, with its exquisite sky, he felt that he could not, though he fain would, continue on his weary way. Fortunately he had come to a small eminence, on the summit of which grew a few palm−trees whose verdure shot into the air and could be seen from afar; this had brought hope and consolation to his heart.

(Here follows a description of the cave which the soldier finds in the rocks.)

His fatigue was so great that he threw himself down on a block of granite, capriciously fashioned [Footnote: Capriciously fashioned. Explain this term.] by nature into the semblance of a camp−bed, and, without taking any precaution for defense, was soon fast in sleep. In the middle of the night his sleep was disturbed by an extraordinary sound. He sat up; the profound silence that reigned around enabled him to distinguish the alternating rhythm of a respiration whose savage energy it was impossible could be that of a human being.

A terrible terror, increased yet more by the silence, the darkness, his racing fancy, froze his heart within him. He felt his hair rise on end, as his eyes, dilated to their utmost, perceived through the gloom two faint amber lights. At first he attributed these lights to the delusion of his vision, but presently the vivid brilliance of the night aided him to gradually distinguish the objects around him in the cave, when he saw, within the space of two feet of him, a huge animal lying at rest. Was it a lion? Was it a tiger? Was it a crocodile?

The Provencal was not sufficiently well educated to know under what sub−species his enemy should be classed; his fear was but the greater because his ignorance led him to imagine every terror at once. He endured most cruel tortures as he noted every variation of the breathing which was so near him; he dared not make the slightest movement.

An odor, pungent like that of a fox, but more penetrating as it were, more profound, filled the cavern. When the Provencal became sensible of this, his terror reached the climax, for now he could no longer doubt the proximity of a terrible companion, whose royal lair [Footnote: Royal lair. Why royal?] he had utilized as a bivouac.

Presently the reflection of the moon as it slowly descended to the horizon, lighted up the den, rendering gradually visible the gleaming, resplendent, and spotted skin of a panther.

This lion of Egypt lay asleep curled up like a great dog, the peaceful possessor of a kennel at the door of some

sumptuous hotel; its eyes opened for a moment, then closed again; its face was turned towards the Frenchman. A thousand confused thoughts passed through the mind of the tiger's prisoner. Should he, as he at first thought of doing, kill it with a shot from his carbine? But he saw plainly that there was not room enough in which to take proper aim; the muzzle would have extended beyond the animal—the bullet would miss the mark. And what if it were to wake!—this fear kept him motionless and rigid.

He heard the pulsing of his heart beating in the so dread silence and he cursed the too violent pulsations which his surging blood brought on, lest they should awaken from sleep the dreadful creature; that slumber which gave him time to think and plan over his escape.

Twice did he place his hand upon his scimitar, intending to cut off his enemy's head; but the difficulty of severing the close haired skin caused him to renounce this daring attempt. To miss was certain death. He preferred the chance of a fair fight, and made up his mind to await the daylight. The dawn did not give him long to wait. It came.

He could now examine the panther at his ease; its muzzle was smeared with blood.

“It's had a good dinner,” he said, without troubling himself to speculate whether the feast might have been of human flesh or not. “It won't be hungry when it wakes.”

It was a female. The fur on her thighs was glistening white. Many small spots like velvet formed beautiful bracelets round her paws; her sinuous tail was also white, ending in black rings. The back of her dress was yellow, like unburnished gold, very lissome, [Footnote: Lissome: supple, nimble.] and soft, and had the characteristic blotches in the shape of pretty rosettes, which distinguish the panther from every other species felis. [Footnote: Species felis. Latin “felis,” a cat.]

This formidable hostess lay tranquilly snoring in an attitude as graceful and easy as that of a cat on the cushion of an ottoman. Her bloody paws, nervous and well armed, were stretched out before her head, which rested on the back of them, while from her muzzle radiated her straight, slender whiskers, like threads of silver.

If he had seen her lying thus, imprisoned in a cage, the Provencal would doubtless have admired the grace of the creature and the vivid contrasts of color which gave her robe an imperial splendour; but just then his sight was jaundiced [Footnote: Jaundiced. Explain this term.] by sinister forebodings.

The presence of the panther, even asleep, had the same effect upon him as the magnetic eyes of a snake are said to have on the nightingale.

The soldier's courage oozed away in the presence of this silent danger, though he was a man who gathered courage at the mouth of a cannon belching forth shot and shell. And yet a bold thought brought daylight to his soul and sealed up the source from whence issued the cold sweat which gathered on his brow. Like men driven to bay, who defy death and offer their bodies to the smiter, so he, seeing in this merely a tragic episode, resolved to play his part with honor to the last.

“The day before yesterday,” said he, “the Arabs might have killed me.”

So considering himself as already dead, he waited bravely, but with anxious curiosity, the awakening of his enemy.

When the sun appeared the panther suddenly opened her eyes; then she stretched out her paws with energy, as if to get rid of cramp. Presently she yawned and showed the frightful armament of her teeth, and the pointed tongue rough as a rasp.

“She is dainty as a woman,” thought the Frenchman, seeing her rolling and turning herself about so softly and coquettishly. She licked off the blood from her paws and muzzle, and scratched her head with reiterated grace of movement.

“Good, make your little toilet” said the Frenchman to himself; he recovered his gayety with his courage. “We are presently about to give each other good−morning,” and he felt for the short poniard that he had abstracted from the Maugrabins. At this instant the panther turned her head toward him and gazed fixedly at him, without otherwise moving.

The rigidity of her metallic eyes and their insupportable lustre made him shudder. The beast approached him; he looked at her caressingly, staring into those bright eyes in an effort to magnetize her—to soothe her. He let her come quite close to him before stirring; then with a gentle movement, he passed his hand over her whole body, from the head to the tail, scratching the flexible vertebrae, [Footnote: Vertebrae: the bones of the spinal column.] which divided the yellow back of the panther. The animal slightly moved her tail voluptuously, and her eyes grew

soft and gentle; and when for the third time the Frenchman had accomplished this interested flattery, she gave vent to those purrings like as cats express their pleasure; but it issued from a throat so deep, so powerful, that it resounded through the cave like the last chords of an organ rolling along the vaulted roof of a church. The Provencal seeing the value of his caresses, redoubled them until they completely soothed and lulled this imperious creature.

When he felt assured that he had extinguished the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so luckily been appeased the day before, he got up to leave the grotto. The panther let him go out, but when he reached the summit of the little knoll she sprang up and bounded after him with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from twig to twig on a tree, and rubbed against his legs, arching her back after the manner of a domestic cat. Then regarding her guest with eyes whose glare had somewhat softened, she gave vent to that wild cry which naturalists compare to the grating of a saw.

“Madame is exacting,” said the Frenchman, smiling.

He was bold enough to play with her ears; he stroked her body and scratched her head good and hard with his nails. He was encouraged with his success, and tickled her skull with the point of his dagger, watching for an opportune moment to kill her, but the hardness of the bone made him tremble, dreading failure.

The sultana of the desert [Footnote: Why does the author call the tiger the sultana of the desert?] showed herself gracious to her slave; she lifted her head, stretched out her neck, and betrayed her delight by the tranquillity of her relaxed attitude. It suddenly occurred to the soldier that, to slay this savage princess with one blow, he must stab deep in the throat.

He raised the blade, when the panther, satisfied, no doubt, threw herself gracefully at his feet and glanced up at him with a look in which, despite her natural ferocity, a glimmer of goodwill was apparent. The poor Provencal, thus frustrated for the nonce, [Footnote: For the nonce: for the present.] ate his dates as he leaned against one of the palm−trees, casting an interrogating glance from time to time across the desert in quest of some deliverer, and on his terrible companion, watching the chance of her uncertain clemency.

The panther looked at the place where the date−stones fell; and each time he threw one, she examined the Frenchman with an eye of commercial distrust. [Footnote: An eye of commercial distrust. Explain this term.] However, the examination seemed to be favorable to him, for, when he had eaten his frugal meal, she licked his boots with her powerful, rough tongue, cleaning off the dust, which was caked in the wrinkles, in a marvellous manner.

“Ah! but how when she is really hungry?” thought the Provencal. In spite of the shudder caused by this thought, his attention was curiously drawn to the symmetrical proportions of the animal, which was certainly one of the most splendid specimens of its race. He began to measure them with his eye. She was three feet in height at the shoulders and four feet in length, not counting her tail; this powerful weapon was nearly three feet long, and rounded like a cudgel. The head, large as that of a lioness, was distinguished by an intelligent, crafty expression. The cold cruelty of the tiger dominated, and yet it bore a vague resemblance to the face of a woman. [Footnote: Face of a woman. The creature, part tiger and part woman, suggests what famous monument?] Indeed, the countenance of this solitary queen had something of the gayety of a Nero [Footnote: Nero: a Roman Emperor notorious for his cruelty.] in his cups; her thirst for blood was slaked, now she wished for amusement.

The soldier tried if he might walk up and down, the panther left him freedom, contenting herself with following him with her eyes, less like a faithful dog watching his master's movements with affectionate solicitude, than a huge Angora cat uneasy and suspicious of every movement.

When he looked around, he saw, by the spring, the carcass of his horse; the panther had dragged the remains all that distance, and had eaten about two−thirds of it already. The sight reassured the Frenchman, it made it easy to explain the panther's absence and the forbearance she had shown him while he slept.

This first good−luck emboldened the soldier to think of the future. He conceived the wild idea of continuing on good terms with his companion and to share her home, to try every means to tame her, and endeavoring to turn her good graces to his account.

With these thoughts he returned to her side, and had the unspeakable joy of seeing her wag her tail with an almost imperceptible motion as he approached. He sat down beside her, fearlessly, and they began to play together. He took her paws and muzzle, twisted her ears, and stroked her warm, delicate flanks. She allowed him to do whatever he liked, and, when he began to stroke the fur on her feet, she carefully drew in her murderously

savage claws, which were sharp and curved like a Damascus sword. [Footnote: Damascus sword: A Damascus blade was famed for its excellence.]

The Frenchman kept one hand on his poniard, and thought to watch his chance to plunge it into the belly of the too confiding animal; but he was fearful lest he might be strangled in her last convulsive struggles; beside this, he felt in his heart a sort of remorse which bade him respect this hitherto inoffensive creature that had done him no hurt. He seemed to have found a friend in the boundless desert, and, half−unconsciously, his mind reverted to his old sweetheart whom he had, in derision, nicknamed “Mignonne.”

This recollection of his youthful days suggested the idea of making the panther answer to this name, now that he began to admire with less fear her graceful swiftness, agility, and softness. Toward the close of the day he had so familiarized himself with his perilous position that he was half in love with his dangerous situation and its painfulness. At last his companion had grown so far tamed that she had caught the habit of looking up at him whenever he called in a falsetto voice, “Mignonne.”

From that time the desert was inhabited for him. It contained a being to whom he could talk and whose ferocity was now lulled into gentleness, although he could not explain to himself this strange friendship. Anxious as he was to keep awake and on guard, as it were, he gradually succumbed to his excessive fatigue of body and mind; he threw himself on the floor of the cave and slept soundly.

On awakening Mignonne was absent; he climbed the hillock and afar off saw her returning in the long bounds characteristic of those animals who cannot run owing to the extreme flexibility of the vertebral column.

Mignonne arrived with bloody jaws; she received the wonted caresses, the tribute her slave hastened to pay, and showed by her purring how transported she was. Her eyes, full of languor, rested more kindly on the Provencal than on the previous day, and he addressed her as he would have done a domestic animal.

“Ah! mademoiselle, you're a nice girl, ain't you? Just see now! we like to be petted, don't we? Are you not ashamed of yourself? So you've been eating some Arab or other, eh? Well, that doesn't matter. They're animals, the same as you are; but don't take to crunching up a Frenchman, bear that in mind, or I shall not love you any longer.”

She played like a dog with its master, allowing herself to be rolled over, knocked about, stroked, and the rest, alternately; at times she would coax him to play by putting her paw upon his knee and making a pretty gesture of solicitation.

One day, under a bright midday sun, a great bird hovered in the sky. The Provencal left his panther to gaze at this new guest; but after pausing for a moment the deserted sultana uttered a deep growl.

“God take me! I do believe that she is jealous,” he cried, seeing the rigid look appearing again in the metallic eyes. “The soul of Virginie has passed into her body, that's sure!”

The eagle disappeared in the ether, and the soldier admired her again, recalled by the panther's evident displeasure, her rounded flanks, and the perfect grace of her attitude. There was youth and grace in her form. The blonde fur of her robe shaded, with delicate gradations, to the dead−white tones of her furry thighs; the vivid sunshine brought out in its fulness the brilliancy of this living gold and its variegated brown spots with indescribable lustre.

The Provencal and the panther looked at each other with a look pregnant with meaning. She trembled with delight (the coquettish creature) when she felt her friend scratch the strong bones of her skull with his nails. Her eyes glittered like lightning−flashes—then she closed them tightly.

“She has a soul!” cried he, looking at the stillness of this queen of the sands, golden like them, white as their waving light, solitary and burning as themselves.

(Here the narrative breaks off somewhat abruptly and continues in the first person—that of the soldier.)

“Suddenly she turned on me in a fury, seizing my thigh with her sharp teeth, and yet (I thought of this afterwards) not cruelly. I imagined that she intended devouring me, and I plunged my poniard in her throat. She rolled over with a cry that rent my soul; she looked at me in her death−struggle, but without anger. I would have given the whole world—my cross, which I had not yet gained, all, everything—to restore her life to her. It was as if I had assassinated a real human being, a friend. When the soldiers who had seen my flag came to my rescue they found me in tears.

“Ah! well, monsieur, I went through the wars in Germany, Spain, Russia, and France; I have marched my carcass well−nigh the world over, but I have seen nothing comparable to the desert.”

—HONORE DE BALZAC (adapted).

[Footnote: Note the detailed description. Does it add to the reality of the scene? Does the author succeed in making the panther appeal to our sympathy? Does the story seem plausible or merely fantastic? Where do you find surprises in the story that add to its interest?]

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE MUSIC

I had engaged him by the year. Twice a week he came and went through his whole repertoire, and lately, out of sympathy for me, he would play the *Miserere* of the *Trovatore*, [Footnote: Miserere of the Trovatore. Trovatore is an opera by Verdi.] which was his show piece, twice over. He stood there in the middle of the street looking steadfastly up at my windows while he played, and when he had finished he would take off his hat with an “Addio, Signor!” [Footnote: Addio Signer: “Good−by, Sir.”]

It is well known that the barrel−organ, like the violin, gets a fuller and more sympathetic tone the older it is. The old artist had an excellent instrument, not of the modern noisy type which imitates a whole orchestra with flutes and bells and beats of drums, but a melancholy old−fashioned barrel−organ [Footnote: A melancholy barrel organ. What does the author mean by this?] which knew how to lend a dreamy mystery to the gayest allegretto, [Footnote: Allegretto: lively, a musical term to denote the tempo of a composition.] and in whose proudest tempo di Marcia [Footnote: Tempo di Marcia: marching time.] there sounded an unmistakable undertone of resignation. And in the tenderer pieces of the repertoire, where the melody, muffled and staggering like a cracked old human voice, groped its way amongst the rusty pipes of the treble, then there was a trembling in the bass like suppressed sobs. Now and then the voice of the tired organ failed it completely, and then the old man would resignedly turn the handle during some bars of rest more touching in their eloquent silence than any music.

True, the instrument was itself very expressive, but the old man had surely his share in the sensation of melancholy which came over me whenever I heard his music. He had his beat in the poor quarter behind the Jardin des Plantes, [Footnote: Jardin des Plantes: the botanical garden.] and many times during my solitary rambles up there had I stopped and taken my place among the scanty audience of ragged street boys which surrounded him.

It was not difficult to see that times were hard—the old man's clothes were doubtful, and the pallor of poverty lay over his withered features, where I read the story of a long life of failure. He came from the mountains around Monte Cassino, [Footnote: Monte Cassino: a monastery on a hill near Cassino, Italy, about forty−five miles from Naples.] so he informed me, but where the monkey hailed from I never quite got to know.

Thus we met from time to time during my rambles in the poor quarters. Had I a moment to spare I stopped for a while to listen to a tune or two, as I saw that it gratified the old man, and since I always carried a lump of sugar in my pocket for any dog acquaintance I might possibly meet, I soon made friends with the monkey also. The relations between the little monkey and her impressario [Footnote: Impressario: the conductor of an opera or a concert.] were unusually cordial, and this notwithstanding that she had completely failed to fulfil the expectations which had been founded upon her—she had never been able to learn a single trick, the old man told me. Thus all attempts at education had long ago been abandoned, and she sat there huddled together on her barrel−organ and did nothing at all. Her face was sad, like that of most animals, and her thoughts were far away. But now and then she woke up from her dreams, and her eyes could then take a suspicious, almost malignant expression, as they lit upon some of the street boys who crowded round her tribune [Footnote: Round her tribune: a curious use of this word, which means a pulpit or bench from which speeches were made.] and tried to pull her tail, which stuck out from her little gold−laced garibaldi. [Footnote: Garibaldi: a jacket which took its name from its likeness in shape to the red shirt worn by the Italian patriot Garibaldi.] To me she was always very amiable; confidently she laid her wrinkled hand in mine and absently she accepted the little attentions I was able to offer her. She was very fond of sweetmeats, and burnt almonds were, in her opinion, the most delectable thing in the world.

Since the old man had once recognized his musical friend on a balcony of the Hotel de L'Avenir, [Footnote: Hotel de L'Avenir: literally, “Hotel of the Future.”] he often came and played under my windows. Later on he became engaged, as already said, to come regularly and play twice a week,—it may, perhaps, appear superfluous for one who was studying medicine, but the old man's terms were so small, and you know I have always been so fond of music. Besides it was the only recreation at hand—I was working to take my degree in the spring.

So passed the autumn, and the hard times came. The rich tried on the new winter fashions, and the poor shivered with the cold. It became more and more difficult for well−gloved hands to leave the warm muff or the fur−lined coat to take out a copper for the beggar, and more and more desperate became the struggle for bread

amongst the problematical existences [Footnote: The problematical existences. Explain this expression.] of the street.

Now and then I came across my friend, and we always had, as before, a kind word for one another. He was now, wrapped up in an old Abruzzi cloak, [Footnote: Abruzzi cloak. Abruzzi is a division of western Italy including three provinces.] and I noticed that the greater the cold became the faster did he turn the handle to keep himself warm; and towards December the *Miserere* itself was performed in allegretto.

The monkey had now become civilian, and wrapped up her little thin body in a long ulster such as Englishmen wear; but she was fearfully cold notwithstanding, and, forgetful of all etiquette, more and more often she jumped from the barrel−organ and crept in under the old man's cloak.

And while they were suffering out there in the cold I sat at home in my cosy, warm room, and instead of helping them, I forgot all about them, more and more taken up as I was with my coming examination, with no thought but for myself. And then one day I suddenly left my lodgings and removed to the Hotel Dieu to take the place of a comrade, and weeks passed before I put my foot out of the hospital.

I remember it so well, it was on New Year's Day we met each other again. I was crossing the Place de Notre Dame, [Footnote: Place de Notre Dame. The square in front of Notre Dame Cathedral.] mass was just over, and the people were streaming out of the old cathedral. As usual, a row of beggars was standing before the door, imploring the charity of the church−goers. At the farther end, and at some distance from the others, an old man stood with bent head and outstretched hat, and with painful surprise I recognized my friend in his threadbare old coat without the Abruzzi cloak, without the barrel−organ, without the monkey. My first impulse was to go up to him, but an uneasy feeling of I do not know what held me back; I felt that I blushed and I did not move from my place. Every now and then a passer−by stopped for a moment and made as if to search his pockets, but I did not see a single copper fall into the old man's hat. The place became gradually deserted, and one beggar after another trotted off with his little earnings. At last a child came out of the church, led by a gentleman in mourning; the child pointed towards the old man, and then ran up to him and laid a silver coin in his hat. The old man humbly bowed his head in thanks, and even I, with my unfortunate absent−mindedness, was very nearly thanking the little donor also, so pleased was I. My friend carefully wrapped up the precious gift in an old pocket−handkerchief, and stooping forward, as if still carrying the barrel−organ on his back, he walked off.

I happened to be quite free that morning, and thinking that a little walk before luncheon could do me no harm after the hospital air, I followed him at a short distance across the Seine. [Footnote: Seine. Paris is on the River Seine. “buon giorno”: “Good day.”] Once or twice I nearly caught him up, and all but tapped him on the shoulder, with a “Buon giorno, Don Gaetano!” Yet, without exactly knowing why, I drew back at the last moment and let him get a few paces ahead of me again.

We had just crossed the Place Maubert [Footnote: Place Maubert: Boulevard St. Germain: streets in Paris.] and turned into the Boulevard St. Germain; the boulevard was full of people, so that, without being noticed, I could approach him quite close. He was standing before an elegant confectioners' shop, and to my surprise he entered without hesitation. I took up my position before the shop window, alongside some shivering street arabs [Footnote: Street Arabs. What is meant by this term?] who stood there, absorbed in the contemplation of the unattainable delicacies within, and I watched the old man carefully untie his pocket−handkerchief and lay the little girl's gift upon the counter. I had hardly time to draw back before he came out with a red paper bag of sweets in his hand, and with rapid steps he started off in the direction of the Jardin des Plantes.

I was very much astonished at what I had seen, and my curiosity made me follow him. He slackened his pace at one of the little slums behind Hopital de la Pitie, [Footnote: Hopital de la Pitie: literally, “Hospital of Pity.”] and I saw him disappear into a dirty old house. I waited outside a minute or two and then I groped my way through the pitch−dark entrance, climbed up a filthy staircase, and found a door slightly ajar. An icy, dark room, in the middle three ragged little children crouched together around a half−extinct braziero, [Footnote: Brazier: a pan for burning coals. Tuscan. Tuscany is one of the divisions of northern Italy.] in the corner the only furniture in the room—a clean iron bedstead, with crucifix and rosary hung on the wall above it, and by the window an image of the Madonna adorned with gaudy paper flowers; I was in Italy, in my poor, exiled Italy. And in the purest Tuscan the eldest sister informed me that Don Gaetano lived in the garret. I went up there and knocked, but got no answer, so I opened the door myself. The room was brightly lit by a blazing fire. With his back towards the door, Don Gaetano was on his knees before the stove busy heating a saucepan over the fire; beside him on the floor lay

an old mattress with the well−known Abruzzi cloak thrown over it, and close by, spread out on a newspaper, were various delicacies—an orange, walnuts, and raisins, and there also was the red paper bag. Don Gaetano dropped a lump of sugar into the saucepan, stirred it with a stick, and in a persuasive voice I heard him say, “Che bella roba, che bella roba, quanto e buono questa latte con lo zucchero! Non piange anima mia, adesso siamo pronti!” [Footnote: “What nice things, what nice things, how good this milk with sugar is! Don't cry, my darling, it is ready now!”]

A slight rustling was heard beneath the Abruzzi cloak and a black little hand was stretched out toward the red paper bag.

“Primo il latte, primo il latte” admonished the old man. “Non importa, piglio tu una,” [Footnote: “The milk first, the milk first—never mind, take one.”] he repeated, and took a big burnt almond out of the paper bag; the little hand disappeared, and a crunching was heard under the cloak. Don Gaetano poured the warm milk in a saucer, and then he carefully lifted up a corner of the cloak. There lay the poor little monkey with heaving breast and eyes glowing with fever. Her face had become so small and her complexion was ashy gray. The old man took her on his knees, and tenderly as a mother he poured some spoonfuls of the warm milk into her mouth. She looked with indifferent eyes towards the delicacies on the table, and absently she let her fingers pass through her master's beard. She was so tired that she could hardly hold her head up, and now and then she coughed so that her thin little body trembled, and she pressed both her hands to her temples. Don Gaetano shook his head sadly, and carefully laid the little invalid back under the cloak.

A feeble blush spread over the old man's face as he caught sight of me. I told him that I happened to be passing by just as he was entering his house, and that I took the liberty of following him upstairs in order to bid him good−morning and to give him my new address, in the hope that he would come and play to me as before. I involuntarily looked round for the barrel−organ as I spoke, and Don Gaetano, who understood, informed me that he no longer played the organ—he sang. I glanced at the precious pile of wood beside the fire−place, at the new blanket that hung before the window to keep out the draught, at the delicacies on the newspaper—and I also understood.

The monkey had been ill three weeks—“la febbre,” [Footnote: La febbre: the fever.] explained the old man. We knelt one on each side of the bed, and the sick animal looked at me with her mute prayer for help. Her nose was hot, as it is with sick children and dogs, her face wrinkled like that of an old, old woman, and her eyes had got quite a human expression. Her breathing was so short, and we could hear how it rattled in her throat. The diagnosis was not difficult—she had consumption. Now and again she stretched out her thin arms as if she implored us to help her, and Don Gaetano thought that she did so because she wished to be bled. I would willingly have given in in this case, although opposed in principle to this treatment, if I had thought it possible that any benefit could have been derived from it; but I knew only too well how unlikely this was, and I tried my best to make Don Gaetano understand it. Unhappily I did not know myself what there was to be done. I had at that time a friend amongst the keepers of the monkey−house in the Jardin des Plantes, and the same night he came with me to have a look at her; he said that there was nothing to be done, and that there was no hope. And he was right. For one week more the fire blazed in Don Gaetano's garret, then it was left to go out, and it became cold and dark as before in the old man's home.

True, he got his barrel−organ out from the pawn−shop, and now and then a copper fell into his hat. He did not die of starvation, and that was about all he asked of life.

The spring came and I left Paris; and God knows what become of Don Gaetano.

If you happen to hear a melancholy old barrel−organ in the courtyard, go to the window and give a penny to the poor errant [Footnote: Errant: wandering.] musician—perhaps it is Don Gaetano! If you find that his organ disturbs you, try if you like it, better by making him stand a little farther off, but don't send him away with harshness! He has to bear so many hard words as it is; why should not we then be a little kind to him—we who love music?

—AXEL MUNTHE (adapted).

[Footnote: What interested the author in the old organ−grinder? What was the music like? Explain the title of the story. By what incidents does the author show the unselfish devotion of the old musician for his pet? Was his pet winning or lovable? Why did the old man care so much for it? Is the picture of the old man dignified or sordid?

Why? Point out instances of dramatic contrast. Are the descriptions in the story simple or elaborate?]

OUT OF DOORS

St. Guido [Footnote: Saint Guido was a fanciful name given to the little boy because his shock of golden curls looked like the nimbus around a saint's head.] ran out at the garden gate into a sandy lane, and down the lane till he came to a grassy bank. He caught hold of the bunches of grass and so pulled himself up. There was a footpath on the top which went straight in between fir−trees, and as he ran along they stood on each side of him like green walls. They were very near together, and even at the top the space between them was so narrow that the sky seemed to come down, and the clouds to be sailing but just over them, as if they would catch and tear in the fir−trees. The path was so little used that it had grown green, and as he ran he knocked dead branches out of his way. Just as he was getting tired of running he reached the end of the path, and came out into a wheat−field. The wheat did not grow very closely, and the spaces were filled with azure corn−flowers. St. Guido thought he was safe away now, so he stopped to look.

There were the fir−trees behind him—a thick wall of green—hedges on the right and left, and the wheat sloped down towards an ash−copse in the hollow. No one was in the field, only the fir−trees, the green hedges, the yellow, wheat, and the sun overhead. Guido kept quite still, because he expected that in a minute the magic would begin, and something would speak to him. His cheeks, which had been flushed with running, grew less hot, but I cannot tell you the exact color they were; for his skin was so white and clear, it would not tan under the sun, yet being always out of doors it had taken the faintest tint of golden brown mixed with rosiness. His blue eyes which had been wide open, as they always were when full of mischief, became softer, and his long eyelashes drooped over them. But as the magic did not begin, Guido walked on slowly into the wheat, which rose nearly to his head, though it was not yet so tall as it would be before the reapers came. He did not break any of the stalks, or bend them down and step on them; he passed between them, and they yielded on either side. The wheat−ears were pale gold, having only just left off their green, and they surrounded him on all sides as if he were bathing.

A butterfly painted a velvety red with white spots came floating along the surface of the corn, [Footnote: Corn. In England corn means wheat, or sometimes rye or barley or oats. What we call corn the English call maize.] and played round his cap, which was a little higher, and was so tinted by the sun that the butterfly was inclined to settle on it. Guido put up his hand to catch the butterfly, forgetting his secret in his desire to touch it. The butterfly was too quick—with a snap of his wings, disdainfully mocking the idea of catching him, away he went. Guido nearly stepped on a humble−bee—buzz−zz! the bee was so alarmed he actually crept up Guido's knickers to the knee, and even then knocked himself against a wheat−ear when he started to fly. Guido kept quite still while the humble−bee was on his knee, knowing that he should not be stung if he did not move. He knew, too, that humble−bees have stings though people often say they have not, and the reason people think they do not possess them is because humble−bees are so good−natured and never sting unless they are very much provoked.

Another bumble−bee went over along the tips of the wheat—burr−rr—as he passed; then a scarlet fly, and next a bright yellow wasp who was telling a friend flying behind him that he knew where there was such a capital piece of wood to bite up into tiny pieces and make into paper for the nest in the thatch, but his friend wanted to go to the house because there was a pear quite ripe there on the wall. Next came a moth, and after the moth a golden fly, and three gnats, and a mouse ran along the dry ground with a curious sniffing rustle close to Guido. A shrill cry came down out of the air, and looking up he saw two swifts [Footnote: Swifts: swallows.] turning circles, and as they passed each other they shrieked—their voices were so shrill they shrieked. They were only saying that in a month their little swifts in the slates would be able to fly. While he sat so quiet on the ground and hidden by the wheat, he heard a cuckoo such a long way off it sounded like a watch when it is covered up. “Cuckoo” did not come full and distinct—it was such a tiny little “cuckoo” caught in the hollow of Guido's ear. The cuckoo must have been a mile away.

Suddenly he thought something went over, and yet he did not see it—perhaps it was the shadow—and he looked up and saw a large bird not very far up, not farther than he could fling, or shoot his arrows, and the bird was fluttering his wings, but did not move away farther, as if he had been tied in the air. Guido knew it was a hawk, and the hawk was staying there to see if there was a mouse or a little bird in the wheat. After a minute the hawk stopped fluttering and lifted his wings together as a butterfly does when he shuts his, and down the hawk

came, straight into the corn. “Go away!” shouted Guido jumping up, and flinging his cap, and the hawk, dreadfully frightened and terribly cross, checked himself and rose again with an angry rush. So the mouse escaped, but Guido could not find his cap for some time. Then he went on, and still the ground sloping sent him down the hill till he came close to the copse.

Some sparrows came out from the copse, [Footnote: Copse: a wood of small trees.] and he stopped and saw one of them perch on a stalk of wheat, with one foot above the other sideways, so that he could pick at the ear and get the corn. Guido watched the sparrow clear the ear, then he moved, and the sparrows flew back to the copse, where they chattered at him for disturbing them. There was a ditch between the corn and the copse, and a streamlet; he picked up a stone and threw it in, and the splash frightened a rabbit, who slipped over the bank and into a hole. The boughs of an oak reached out across to the corn, and made so pleasant a shade that Guido, who was very hot from walking in the sun, sat down on the bank of the streamlet with his feet dangling over it, and watched the floating grass sway slowly as the water ran. Gently he leaned back till his back rested on the sloping ground—he raised one knee, and left the other foot over the verge where the tip of the tallest rushes touched it. Before he had been there a minute he remembered the secret which a fern had taught him.

First, if he wanted to know anything, or to hear a story, or what the grass was saying, or the oak−leaves singing, he must be careful not to interfere as he had done just now with the butterfly by trying to catch him. Fortunately, that butterfly was a nice butterfly, and very kindhearted, but sometimes, if you interfered with one thing, it would tell another thing, and they would all know in a moment, and stop talking, and never say a word. Once, while they were all talking pleasantly, Guido caught a fly in his hand; he felt his hand tickle as the fly stepped on it, and he shut up his little fist so quickly he caught the fly in the hollow between the palm and his fingers. The fly went buzz, and rushed to get out, but Guido laughed, so the fly buzzed again, and just told the grass, and the grass told the bushes, and everything knew in a moment, and Guido never heard another word all that day. Yet sometimes now they all knew something about him; they would go on talking. You see, they all rather petted and spoiled him. Next, if Guido did not hear them conversing, the fern said he must touch a little piece of grass and put it against his cheek, or a leaf, and kiss it, and say, “Leaf, leaf, tell them I am here.”

Now, while he was lying down, and the tip of the rushes touched his foot, he remembered this, so he moved the rush with his foot and said, “Rush, rush, tell them I am here.” Immediately there came a little wind, and the wheat swung to and fro, the oak−leaves rustled, the rushes bowed, and the shadows slipped forwards and back again. Then it was still.

—RICHARD JEFFERIES (adapted).

[Footnote: Whore do you imagine this scene is laid? What things in the text suggest this? Do you get a single picture, or a rapid succession of pictures? Which is the author really giving you: nature as it is, or as it seems to the boy? Has any of it ever seemed so to you? Note the appeal to sight, hearing, and touch; note the use of color. Does the author show a love for, and knowledge of, nature? Select the passages in which the sympathy between the boy and all nature is dwelt on.]

THE TABOO

There is a marked similarity, almost an identity, between the religious institutions of most of the Polynesian islands; [Footnote: Polynesian Islands: in the Pacific, just east of Australia.] and in all exists the mysterious “Taboo,” restricted in its uses to a greater or less extent. So strange and complex in its arrangements is this remarkable system, that I have in several cases met with individuals who, after residing for years among the islands in the Pacific, and acquiring a considerable knowledge of the language, have nevertheless been altogether unable to give any satisfactory account of its operations. Situated as I was in the Typce valley, I perceived every hour the effects of this all−controlling power, without in the least comprehending it. Those effects were indeed wide−spread and universal, pervading the most important as well as the minutest transactions of life. The savage, in short, lives in the continual observance of its dictates, which guide and control every action of his being.

For several days after entering the valley, I had been saluted at least fifty times in the twenty−four hours with the talismanic [Footnote: Talismanic: having the properties of a charm.] word “Taboo" shrieked in my ears, at some gross violation of its provisions, of which I had unconsciously been guilty. The day after our arrival I happened to hand some tobacco to Toby over the head of a native who sat between us. He started up as if stung by an adder; while the whole company, manifesting an equal degree of horror, simultaneously screamed out “Taboo!” I never again perpetrated a similar piece of ill−manners, which indeed was forbidden by the canons of good breeding as well as by the mandates of the taboo. But it was not always so easy to perceive wherein you had contravened [Footnote: Contravened: come into conflict with.] the spirit of this institution. I was many times called to order, if I may use the phrase, when I could not for the life of me conjecture what particular offense I had committed.

One day I was strolling through a secluded portion of the valley; and hearing the musical sound of the cloth−mallet at a little distance, I turned down a path that conducted me in a few moments to a house where there were some half−dozen girls employed in making tappa. [Footnote: Tappa: a kind of cloth made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry.] This was an operation I had frequently witnessed, and had handled the bark in all the various stages of its preparation. On the present occasion the females were intent upon their occupation; and after looking up and talking gayly to me for a few moments, they resumed their employment. I regarded them for awhile in silence, and then carelessly picking up a handful of the material that lay around, proceeded unconsciously to pick it apart. While thus engaged, I was suddenly startled by a scream, like that of a whole boarding−school of young ladies just on the point of going into hysterics. Leaping up with the idea of seeing a score of Happar warriors about to perform anew the Sabine atrocity, [Footnote: Sabine atrocity: referring to the carrying off of the Sabine women by the Romans in the legendary history of early Rome.] I found myself confronted by the company of girls, who, having dropped their work, stood before me with staring eyes, swelling bosoms, and fingers pointed in horror towards me.

Thinking that some venomous reptile must be concealed in the bark which I held in my hand, I began cautiously to separate and examine it. Whilst I did so the horrified girls redoubled their shrieks. Their wild cries and frightened motions actually alarmed me; and throwing down the tappa, I was about to rush from the house, when in the same instant their clamors ceased, and one of them, seizing me by the arm, pointed to the broken fibres that had just fallen from my grasp, and screamed in my ear the fatal word “Taboo!”

I subsequently found out that the fabric they were engaged in making was of a peculiar kind, destined to be worn on the heads of females; and through every stage of its manufacture was guarded by a rigorous taboo, which interdicted the whole masculine gender from even so much as touching it.

Frequently in walking through the groves, I observed bread−fruit and cocoanut trees with a wreath of leaves twined in a peculiar fashion about their trunks. This was the mark of the taboo. The trees themselves, their fruit, and even the shadows they cast upon the ground, were consecrated by its presence. In the same way a pipe which the King had bestowed upon me was rendered sacred in the eyes of the natives, none of whom could I ever prevail upon to smoke from it. The bowl was encircled by a woven band of grass, somewhat resembling those Turks' heads occasionally worked in the handles of our whip−stalks. A similar badge was once braided about my wrist by the royal hand of Mehevi himself, who, as soon as he had concluded the operation, pronounced me “Taboo.”

This occurred shortly after Toby's disappearance; and were it not that from the first moment I had entered the valley the natives had treated me with uniform kindness, I should have supposed that their conduct afterwards was to be ascribed to the fact that I had received this sacred investiture.

—HERMAN MELVILLE.

[Footnote: The author, Herman Melville, was born in New York in 1819. In his youth he ran away from home and became a sailor on a whaling vessel. Escaping from the cruel tyranny of the captain, he reached the Marquesas Islands, where he had strange adventures as the captive of a tribe of cannibals in the Typee Valley. He lived here many months, and finally returned home in an Australian ship.]

[Footnote: Many writers on the customs of primitive people suppose the taboo to be the earliest form of law. It is commonly imposed by the king or the high priest of the tribe. Does the “taboo” here seem to you to be a matter of law or religion? Have we any “taboos” in our social system? What do we mean when we say of an act or a thing that it is “taboo,” or “tabooed”? Does ceremoniousness increase or decrease with civilization?]

SCHOOL DAYS AT THE CONVENT

I waited for night and supper very impatiently. Recreation time began as soon as we left the refectory. [Footnote: Refectory: the dining hall.] In summer the two classes went to the garden. In winter each class went to its own room: the seniors to their fine and spacious study; we to our forlorn quarters, where there was no room to play, and where our teacher forced us to “amuse” ourselves quietly,—that is, not at all. Leaving the refectory always made a momentary confusion, and I admired the way the “devils” of the two classes managed to create the slight disorder under whose favor one could easily escape. The cloister [Footnote: Cloister: the covered arched passage on the side of a court.] had but one little lamp to light it: this left the other three galleries in semi−darkness. Instead of walking straight ahead towards the juniors' room, you stepped to the left, let the flock pass on, and you were free. I did so, and found myself in the dark with my friend Mary and the other “devils” she had told me would be there. They were all armed, some with logs, others with tongs. I had nothing, but was bold enough to go to the school−room, get a poker, and return to my accomplices without being noticed.

Then they initiated me into the great secret, and we started on our expedition.

The great secret was the traditional legend of the convent: a dream handed down from generation to generation, and from “devil” to “devil,” for about two centuries; a romantic fiction which may have had some foundation of truth at the beginning, but now rested merely on the needs of our imagination. Its object was to “deliver the victim.” There was a prisoner, some said several prisoners, shut up somewhere in an impenetrable retreat: either a cell hidden and bricked up in the thickness of the walls, or in a dungeon under the vaults of the immense sub−basements extending beneath the monastery as well as under a great part of the Saint−Victor district. There were indeed magnificent cellars there,—a real subterranean city, whose limits we never found,—and they had many mysterious outlets at different points within the vast area of the inclosure. We were told that at a great distance off, these cellars joined the excavations running under the greater part of Paris and the surrounding country as far as Vincennes. [Footnote: Vincennes: a town about two miles from Paris.] They said that by following our convent cellars you could reach the Catacombs, [Footnote: Catacombs: subterranean passages.] the quarries, the baths of Julian, [Footnote: Baths of Julian: a Roman emperor of the fourth century.] and what not. These vaults were the key to a world of darkness, terrors, mysteries: an immense abyss dug beneath our feet, closed by iron gates, whose exploration was as perilous as the descent into hell of AEneas or Dante. For this reason it was absolutely imperative to get there, in spite of the insurmountable difficulties of the enterprise, and the terrible punishments the discovery of our secret would provoke.

Entering these subterranean domains was one of those unhoped−for strokes of good luck that occurred once, or at most twice, in the life of a “devil,” after years of perseverance and mental effort. It was of no use thinking of getting in by the main door. That door was at the bottom of a wide staircase next to the kitchens, which were cellars too; and here the lay sisters [Footnote: Lay sisters: the nuns who are not in holy orders.] congregated.

But we were sure that the vaults could be reached by a thousand other ways, even by the roof. According to us, every nailed−up door, every dark corner under a staircase, every hollow−sounding wall, might communicate mysteriously with the subterranean region; and we looked for that communication most earnestly up to the very attic.

I had read Mrs. Radcliffe's “Castle of the Pyrenees” [Footnote: Castle of the Pyrenees. Mrs. Radcliffe's novels were the first “mystery and horror” tales to become popular.] at Nohant, with terror and delight. My companions had many another Scotch and Irish legend in their heads, all fit to set one's hair on end. The convent too had innumerable stories of its own lamentable events,—about ghosts, dungeons, inexplicable apparitions, and mysterious noises. All this, and the thought of finally discovering the tremendous secret of the victim, so kindled our imaginations that we were sure we heard sighs and groans start from under the stones, or breathe through the cracks of doors and walls.

We started off, my companions for the hundredth, I for the first time, in search of that elusive captive,—languishing no one knew where, but certainly somewhere, and whom perhaps we were called to discover. She must have been very old, considering how long she had been sought in vain! She might have been over two hundred years old, but we did not mind that! We sought her, called her, thought of her incessantly, and

never despaired.

That evening I was led into the oldest and most broken−up part of the buildings,—perhaps the most exciting locality for our exploration. We selected a little passage with wooden railings overlooking an empty space without any known outlet. A staircase with banisters led to this unknown region, but an oaken door forbade access to the stairs. We had to get around the obstacle by passing from the railing to the banisters, and walk down the outside of the worm−eaten balusters. There was a dark void below us whose depth we could not fathom. We had only a little taper (a “rat"), and that hardly let us see more than the first steps of the mysterious staircase.

We were at the bottom in a moment; and with more joy than disappointment found that we were directly under the passage, in a square space without any opening. Not a door nor a window, nor any explicable purpose for this sort of closed vestibule. Why was there a staircase leading into a blind space? Why was there a strong padlocked door shutting off the staircase?

The little taper was divided into several lengths, and each one began examining for herself. The staircase was made of wood. A secret spring in one of the steps must lead to a passage, another staircase, or a hidden trap. While some explored the staircase, and tried to force its old planks apart, others groped along the wall in search of a knob, a rack, a ring, or any of the thousand contrivances mentioned in the chronicles of old manors as moving a stone, turning a panel, or opening an entrance into unknown regions.

Alas, there was nothing! The wall was smooth and plastered. The pavement sounded dull; not a stone was loose, and the staircase hid no spring. One of us looked further. She declared that in the extreme corner under the staircase the wall had a hollow sound; we struck it, and found it true. “It's here!” we all exclaimed. “There's a walled−up passage in there, but that passage leads to the awful dungeon. That is the way down to the sepulchre holding the living victims.” We glued our ears to the wall, heard nothing; still the discoverer maintained that she could hear confused groans and clanking chains. What was to be done?

“Why, it's quite plain,” said Mary: “we must pull the wall down. All of us together can surely make a hole in it.”

Nothing seemed easier to us; and we all went to work,—some trying to knock it down with their logs, others scraping it with their shovels and tongs,—never thinking that by worrying those poor shaky walls, we risked tumbling the building down on our heads. Fortunately we could not do much harm, because the noise made by the logs would have attracted some one.

We had to be satisfied with pushing and scratching. Yet we had managed to make quite a noticeable hole in the plaster, lime, and stones, when the bell rang for prayers. We had just time to repeat our perilous escapade, [Footnote: Escapade: prank.] put out our lights, separate, and grope our way back to the schoolrooms. We put off the continuation of the enterprise till the next day, and appointed the same place of meeting. Those who got there first were not to wait for those who might be detained by punishment or unusual surveillance. Each one was to do her best to scoop out the wall. It would be just so much done toward the next day's work. There was no chance of any one's noticing it, as no one ever went down into that blind hallway given over to mice and spiders.

We dusted each other off, regained the cloister, slipped into our respective class−rooms, and were ready to kneel at prayers with the others. I forget whether we were noticed and punished that evening. It happened so often that no single event of the kind has any special date in the great number. Still we could often carry on our work with impunity.

The search for the great secret and the dungeon lasted the whole winter I spent in the junior class. The wall was perceptibly damaged, but we were stopped by reaching wooden girders. We looked elsewhere, ransacked twenty different places, never having the least success, yet never losing hope.

One day we thought we would look for some mansard [Footnote: Mansard: having two slopes.] window which might be, so to speak, the upper key to the so ardently desired subterranean world. There were many such windows, whose purpose we ignored. There was a little room in the attic where we practiced on one of the thirty pianos scattered through the establishment. We had an hour for this practice every day, and very few of us cared for it. As I always loved music, I liked to practice. But I was becoming more of an artist in romance than music; for what more beautiful poem could there be than the romance in action we were pursuing with our joint imaginations, courage, and palpitating emotions?

In this way the piano hour became the daily hour for adventures, without detriment, however, to the evening ones. We appointed meetings in one of these straggling rooms, and from there would go to the “I don't know

where" or the "As you please" of fancy.

From the attic where I was supposed to be playing scales, I could see a labyrinth of roofs, sheds, lofts, and slopes, all covered with moss−grown tiles and decorated with broken chimneys, offering a vast field for new explorations. So on the roof we went. It was not hard to jump out of the window. Six feet below us there was a gutter joining two gables. It was more imprudent than difficult to scale these gables, meet others, jump from slope to slope, and run about like cats; and danger, far from restraining, only seemed to stimulate us.

There was something exceedingly foolish, but at the same time heroic, in this mania of "seeking the victim"; foolish, because we had to suppose that the nuns, whose gentleness and kindness we worshipped, were practicing horrible tortures upon some one; heroic, because we risked our lives every day to deliver an imaginary creature, who was the object of our most generous thought and most chivalrous undertakings.

We had been out about an hour, spying into the garden, looking down on a great part of the courts and buildings, and carefully hiding behind chimneys whenever we saw a black−veiled nun, who might have raised her head and seen us in the clouds, when we asked ourselves how we should get back. The arrangement of the roofs had allowed us to step or jump down. Going up was not so easy. I think it would have been impossible without a ladder. We scarcely knew where we were. At last we recognized a parlor−boarder's window,—Sidonie Macdonald's, the celebrated general's daughter. It could be reached by a final jump, but would be more dangerous than the others. I jumped too hurriedly, and caught my heel in a flat sky−light, through which I should have fallen thirty feet into a hall near the junior's room, if by chance my awkwardness had not made me swerve. I got off with two badly flayed knees, but did not give them a second thought. My heel had broken into a part of the sash of that deuced window, and smashed half a dozen panes, which dropped with a frightful crash quite near the kitchen entrance. A great noise arose at once among the lay sisters, and through the opening I had just made, we could hear Sister Theresa's loud voice screaming, "Cats!" and accusing Whisky—Mother Alippe's big tom−cat—of fighting with all his fellows, and breaking all the windows in the house. But sister Mary defended the cat's morals, and Sister Helen was sure that a chimney had fallen on the roof. This discussion started the nervous giggle that nothing can stop in little girls. We heard the sisters on the stairs, we should be caught in the very act of walking on the roofs, and still we could not stir to find refuge. Then I discovered that one of my shoes was gone,—that it had dropped through the broken sash into the kitchen hall. Though my knees were bleeding, my laughter was so uncontrollable that I could not say a word, but merely showed my unshod foot and explained what had happened by dumb show. A new explosion of laughter followed, although the alarm had been given and the lay sisters were near.

We were soon reassured. Being sheltered and hidden by overhanging roofs, we could hardly be discovered without getting up to the broken window by a ladder, or following the road we had taken. And that was something we could safely challenge any of the nuns to do. So when we had recognized the advantage of our position, we began to me−ouw Homerically, so that Whisky and his family might be accused and convicted in our stead. Then we made for the window of Sidonie, who did not welcome us. The poor child was practicing on the piano, and paying no attention to the feline howls vaguely striking her ear. She was delicate and nervous, very gentle, and quite incapable of understanding what pleasure we could find in roaming over roofs. As she sat playing, her back was turned to the window; and when we burst into it in a bunch, she screamed aloud. We lost little time in quieting her. Her cries would attract the nuns; so we sprang into the room and scampered to the door, while she stood trembling and staring, seeing all the strange procession flit by without understanding it nor recognizing any one of us, so terrified was she. In a moment we had all dispersed: one went to the upper room whence we had started, and played the piano with might and main; another took a round−about way to the school−room. As for me, I had to find my shoe, and secure that piece of evidence, if I still had the time. I managed to avoid the lay sisters, and to find the kitchen entry free. "Audaces fortuna juvat," [Footnote: Audaces fortuna juvat: "Fortune favors the brave."] said I to myself thinking of the aphorisms Deschartres [Footnote: Deschartres: the tutor of George Sand's father.] had taught me And indeed I found the lucky shoe, where it had fallen in a dark corner and not been seen. Whisky alone was accused. My knees hurt me very much for a few days but, I did not brag of them; and the explorations did not slacken.

—GEORGE SAND (adapted).

[Footnote: George Sand is a nom de plume. The author's real name is Armandine Lucile Aurore Dupin. She was a famous French novelist and playwright—born 1804, died 1876.]

[Footnote: Could you tell from the context where the scene is laid? What kind of child do you imagine the writer was? Has the narrative the stamp of a real experience? Do you know any books similar to what you may imagine the “Castle of the Pyrenees” to be?]

IN BRITTANY

She [the writer, L. M. A.] soon ceased to be surprised at any demonstration of feminine strength, skill, and independence, for everywhere the women took the lead.

They not only kept house, reared children, and knit every imaginable garment the human frame can wear, but kept the shops and the markets, tilled the gardens, cleaned the streets, and bought and sold cattle, leaving the men free to enjoy the only pursuits they seemed inclined to follow,—breaking horses, [Footnote: Breaking horses: training horses to work, an expression familiar to every country child.] mending roads, and getting drunk.

The markets seemed entirely in the hands of the women, and lively scenes they presented to unaccustomed eyes, especially the pig−market, held every week, in the square before Madame C.'s house. At dawn the squealing began, and was kept up till sunset. The carts came in from all the neighboring hamlets, with tubs full of infant pigs, over which the women watched with maternal care till they were safely deposited among the rows of tubs that stood along the walk facing Anne of Bretaigne's [Footnote: Anne of Bretaigne: the daughter of Francis II, duke of Brittany; born at Nantes, 1476.] gray old tower, and the pleasant promenade which was once the fosse [Footnote: Fosse: a moat; a ditch.] about the city walls.

Here Madame would seat herself and knit briskly till a purchaser applied, when she would drop her work, dive among the pink innocents, and hold one up by its unhappy leg, undisturbed by its doleful cries, while she settled its price with a blue−gowned, white−capped neighbor, as sharp−witted and shrill−tongued as herself. If the bargain was struck, they slapped their hands together in a peculiar way, and the new owner clapped her purchase into a meal−bag, slung it over her shoulder, and departed with her squirming, squealing treasure as calmly as a Boston lady with a satchel full of ribbons and gloves.

More mature pigs came to market on their own legs, and very long, feeble legs they were, for a more unsightly beast than a Breton pig was never seen out of a toy Noah's ark. Tall, thin, high−backed, and sharp−nosed, these porcine [Footnote: Porcine: relating to swine; hoglike.] victims tottered to their doom, with dismal wailings, and not a vestige of spirit till the trials and excitement of the day goaded them to rebellion, when their antics furnished fun for the public. Miss Livy observed that the women could manage the pigs when men failed entirely. The latter hustled, lugged, or lashed, unmercifully and unsuccessfully; the former, with that fine tact which helps them to lead nobler animals than pigs, would soothe, sympathize, coax, and gently beguile the poor beasts, or devise ways of mitigating their bewilderment and woe, which did honor to the sex, and triumphantly illustrated the power of moral suasion.

One amiable lady, who had purchased two small pigs and a coop full of fowls, attempted to carry them all on one donkey. But the piggies rebelled lustily in the bags, the ducks remonstrated against their unquiet neighbors, and the donkey indignantly refused to stir a step till the unseemly uproar was calmed. But the Bretonne was equal to the occasion; for, after a pause of meditation, she solved the problem by tying the bags round the necks of the pigs so that they could enjoy the prospect. This appeased them at once, and produced a general lull; for when the pigs stopped squealing, the ducks stopped quacking, the donkey ceased his bray, and the party moved on in dignified silence, with the youthful pigs, one black, one white, serenely regarding life from their bags.

Another time, a woman leading a newly bought cow, came through the square, where the noise alarmed the beast so much that she became unruly, and pranced in a most dangerous manner. Miss Livy hung out of the window, breathless with interest, and ready to fly with brandy and bandages at a minute's notice, for it seemed inevitable that the woman would be tossed up among the lindens before the cow was conquered. The few men who were lounging about, stood with their hands in their pockets, watching the struggle without offering to help, till the cow scooped the lady up on her horns ready for a toss. Livy shrieked, but Madame just held on, kicking so vigorously that the cow was glad to set her down, when, instead of fainting she coolly informed the men, who, seeing her danger, had approached, that she “could arrange her cow for herself and did not want any help,” which she proved by tying a big blue handkerchief over the animal's eyes, producing instant docility; and then she was led away by her flushed but triumphant mistress, who calmly settled her cap, and took a pinch of snuff to refresh herself, after a scuffle which would have annihilated most women.

When Madame C.'s wood was put in, the newcomers were interested in watching the job, for it was done in a

truly Bretonesque manner. It arrived in several odd carts, each drawn by four great horses, with men to each team; and as the carts were clumsy, the horses wild, and the men stupid, the square presented a lively spectacle. At one time there were three carts, twelve horses, and six men all in a snarl, while a dozen women stood at their doors and gave advice. One was washing a lettuce, another dressing her baby, a third twirling her distaff, and a fourth with her little bowl of soup, which she ate in public while gesticulating so frantically that her sabots [Footnote: Sabots: wooden shoes.] clattered on the stones.

The horses had a free fight, and the men swore and shouted in vain, till the lady with the baby suddenly went to the rescue. Planting the naked cherub on the doorstep, this energetic matron charged in among the rampant animals, and by some magic touch untangled the teams, quieted the most fractious, a big gray brute prancing like a mad elephant, then returned to her baby, who was placidly eating dirt, and with a polite “Voila, messieurs!” [Footnote: Voila Messieurs: “There you are, gentlemen.”] she whipped little Jean into his shirt, while the men sat down to smoke.

It took two deliberate men nearly a week to split the gnarled logs, and one brisk woman carried them into the cellar and piled them neatly. The men stopped about once an hour to smoke, drink cider, or rest. The woman worked steadily from morning till night, only pausing at noon for a bit of bread and the soup good Coste sent out to her. The men got two francs a day, the woman half a franc; and, as nothing was taken out of it for wine or tobacco, her ten cents probably went farther than their forty.

This same capable lady used to come to market with a baby on one arm, a basket of fruit on the other, leading a pig, driving a donkey, and surrounded by sheep, while her head bore a pannier [Footnote: Pannier. Panniers are a pair of baskets slung across the back of a horse or donkey.] of vegetables, and her hands spun busily with a distaff. How she ever got on with these trifling incumbrances, was a mystery; but there she was, busy, placid, and smiling, in the midst of the crowd, and at night went home with her shopping well content.

The washerwomen were among the happiest of these happy souls, and nowhere were seen prettier pictures than they made, clustered round the fountains or tanks by the way, scrubbing, slapping, singing, and gossiping, as they washed or spread their linen on the green hedges and daisied grass in the bright spring weather. One envied the cheery faces under the queer caps, the stout arms that scrubbed all day, and were not too tired to carry some chubby Jean or little Marie when night came, and, most of all, the contented hearts in the broad bosoms under the white kerchiefs, for no complaint did one hear from these hard−working, happy women. The same brave spirit seems to possess them now as that which carried them heroically to their fate in the Revolution, when hundreds of mothers and children were shot at Nantes [Footnote: Nantes: a town near the mouth of the Loire River.] and died without murmur.

—LOUISA ALCOTT.

[Footnote: What traits does the author find most admirable in the women of Brittany? Show how these traits are brought out by contrast with the behavior of the men. Do women in this country do the same kinds of work as the European peasant women? What other things might the descriptions have included if the author had not been so much interested in the people? What parts of the sketch are humorous? Point out passages that are effective through contrast. Show how the women of Brittany are made to seem womanly and dignified in spite of the amusement they furnish us.]

THE ADIRONDACKS

One day we visited a cave some two miles down the stream, which had recently been discovered. We squeezed and wriggled through a big crack or cleft in the side of the mountain, for about one hundred feet, when we emerged into a large dome−shaped passage, the abode, during certain seasons of the year, of innumerable bats, and at all times of primeval darkness. There were various other crannies and pit−holes opening into it, some of which we explored. The voice of running water was heard everywhere, betraying the proximity of the little stream by whose ceaseless corroding the cave and its entrance had been worn. This streamlet flowed out of the mouth of the cave, and came from a lake on the top of the mountain; this accounted for its warmth to the hand, which surprised us all.

Birds of any kind were rare in these woods. A pigeon−hawk came prowling by our camp, and the faint piping call of the nuthatches, leading their young through the high trees, was often heard.

On the third day our guide proposed to conduct us to a lake in the mountains where we could float for deer.

Our journey commenced in a steep and rugged ascent, which brought us, after an hour's heavy climbing, to an elevated region of pine−forest, years before ravished by lumbermen, and presenting all manner of obstacles to our awkward and incumbered pedestrianism. The woods were largely pine, though yellow birch, beech and maple were common. The satisfaction of having a gun, should any game show itself, was the chief compensation to those of us who were thus burdened. A partridge would occasionally whir up before us, or a red squirrel snicker and hasten to his den; else the woods appeared quite tenantless. The most noted object was a mammoth pine, apparently the last of a great race, which presided over a cluster of yellow birches, on the side of the mountain.

About noon we came out upon a long, shallow sheet of water which the guide called Bloody Moose Pond, from the tradition that a moose had been slaughtered there many years before. Looking out over the silent and lovely scene, his eye was the first to detect an object, apparently feeding upon lily−pads, which our willing fancies readily shaped into a deer. As we were eagerly waiting some movement to confirm this impression, it lifted up its head, and lo! a great blue heron. Seeing us approach, it spread its long wings and flew solemnly across to a dead tree on the other side of the lake, enhancing rather than relieving the loneliness and desolation that brooded over the scene. As we proceeded it flew from tree to tree in advance of us, apparently loth to be disturbed in its ancient and solitary domain. In the margin of the pond we found the pitcher−plant growing, and here and there in the sand the closed gentian lifted up its blue head.

In traversing the shores of this wild, desolate lake, I was conscious of a slight thrill of expectation, as if some secret of Nature might here be revealed, or some rare and unheard−of game disturbed. There is ever a lurking suspicion that the beginning of things is in some way associated with water, and one may notice that in his private walks he is led by a curious attraction to fetch all the springs and ponds in his route, as if by them was the place for wonders and miracles to happen. Once, while in advance of my companions, I saw, from a high rock, a commotion in the water near the shore, but on reaching the point found only the marks of musquash [Footnote: Musquash: muskrat.] degrees.

Passing on through the forest, after many adventures with the pine knots, we reached, about the middle of the afternoon, our destination, Nate's Pond—a pretty sheet of water, lying like a silver mirror in the lap of the mountain, about a mile long and half a mile wide, surrounded by dark forests of balsam, hemlock, and pine, and, like the one we had just passed, a very picture of unbroken solitude.

It is not in the woods alone to give one this impression of utter loneliness. In the woods are sounds and voices, and a dumb kind of companionship; one is little more than a walking tree himself; but come upon one of these mountain lakes, and the wildness stands revealed and meets you face to face. Water is thus facile and adaptive, that it makes the wild more wild, while it enhances culture and art.

The end of the pond which we approached was quite shoal, the stones rising above the surface as in a summer brook, and everywhere showing marks of the noble game we were in quest of,—footprints, dung, and cropped and uprooted lily−pads. After resting for a half hour, and replenishing our game−pouches at the expense of the most respectable frogs of the locality, we filed on through the soft, resinous pinewoods, intending to camp near the other end of the lake, where, the guide assured us, we should find a hunter's cabin ready built. A half hour's march

brought us to the locality, and a most delightful one it was, so hospitable and inviting that all the kindly and beneficent influences of the woods must have abided there. In a slight depression in the woods, about one hundred yards from the lake, though hidden from it for a hunter's reasons, surrounded by a heavy growth of birch, hemlock, and pine, with a lining of balsam and fir, the rude cabin welcomed us. It was of the approved style, three sides inclosed, with a roof of bark and a bed of boughs, and a rock in front that afforded a permanent back−log to all fires. A faint voice of running water was heard near by, and, following the sound, a delicious spring rivulet was disclosed, hidden by the moss and debris as by a new fall of snow, but here and there rising in little well−like openings, as if for our special convenience.

—JOHN BURROUGHS.

[Footnote: What does this power of minute observation tell you about the writer? What other qualities of the naturalist does Burroughs show in this account? What things in nature seem most to attract his attention? Do you know what science now says about “the beginning of things” being “associated with water”? What do you imagine were the “adventures with the pine knots” that Burroughs speaks of?]

AN ASCENT OF KILAUEA

[Footnote: Kilauea: a volcano on the island of Hawaii.]

At last we found ourselves at the very edge of the old crater, the bed of which, three or four hundred feet beneath us, was surrounded by steep and in many places overhanging sides. It looked like an enormous cauldron, four or five miles in width, full of a mass of cooled pitch. In the center was the still glowing stream of dark red lava flowing slowly toward us, and in every direction were red−hot patches, and flames, and smoke, issuing from the ground.

Yet the first sensation is rather one of disappointment, as one expects greater activity on the part of the volcano; but the new crater was still to be seen, containing the lake of fire, with steep walls rising up in the midst of the sea of lava.

We spent the night at the Volcano House, and at three o'clock the next afternoon we set out, a party of eight, with two guides, and three porters to carry our wraps and provisions, and to bring back specimens.

First of all we descended the precipice, three hundred feet in depth, forming the wall of the old crater, but now thickly covered with vegetation. It is so steep in many places that flights of zigzag wooden steps have been inserted in the face of the cliff in some places, in order to render the descent practicable.

At the bottom we stepped straight on to the surface of cold boiled lava, which we had seen from above last night. Even here, in every crevice where a few grains of soil had collected, delicate little ferns might be seen struggling for life, and thrusting out their green fronds towards the light.

It was the most extraordinary walk imaginable, over that vast plain of lava, twisted and distorted into every conceivable shape and form, according to the temperature it had originally attained and the rapidity with which it had cooled, its surface, like half−molten glass, cracking and breaking beneath our feet.

Sometimes we came to a patch that looked like the contents of a pot, suddenly petrified in the act of boiling; sometimes the black, iridescent lava had assumed the form of waves, or more frequently of huge masses of rope, twisted and coiled together; sometimes it was piled up like a collection of organ pipes, or had gathered into mounds and cones of various dimensions.

As we proceeded, the lava became hotter and hotter, and from every crack arose gaseous fumes, affecting our noses and throats in a painful manner; till at last, when we had to pass to leeward [Footnote: Leeward: away from the wind.] of the molten stream flowing from the lake, the vapors almost choked us, and it was with difficulty we continued to advance.

The lava was more glassy and transparent−looking, as if it had been fused at a higher temperature than usual; and the crystals of sulphur, alum, and other minerals, with which it abounded, reflected the light in bright prismatic colors. In places it was quite transparent, and we could see beneath it the long streaks of a stringy kind of lava, like brown spun glass, called “Pele's hair.”

At last we reached the foot of the present crater, and commenced the ascent of the outer wall. Many times the thin crust gave way beneath our guide, and he had to retire quickly from the hot, blinding, choking fumes that immediately burst forth. But we succeeded in reaching the top, and then what a sight presented itself to our astonished eyes! I could neither speak nor move at first, but could only stand and gaze at the horrible grandeur of the scene.

We were standing on the extreme edge of a precipice, overhanging a lake of molten fire, a hundred feet below us, nearly a mile across. Dashing against the cliffs on the opposite side, with a noise like the roar of a stormy ocean, waves of blood−red fiery liquid lava hurled their billows upon an iron−bound headland, and then rushed up the face of the cliffs to toss their gory spray high in the air.

The restless, heaving lake boiled and bubbled, never remaining the same for two minutes together. Its normal color seemed to be a dull dark red, covered with a thin gray scum, which every moment and in every part swelled and cracked, and emitted fountains, cascades, and whirlpools of yellow and red fire, while sometimes one big golden river, sometimes four or five, flowed across it.

As the sun set and as darkness enveloped the scene, it became more awful than ever. We retired a little way from the brink to breathe some fresh air, and to try and eat the food we had brought with us; but this was an

impossibility. Every instant a fresh explosion or glare made us jump up to survey the scene.

The violent struggles of the lava to escape from its fiery bed, and the loud and awful noises by which they were at times, accompanied, suggested the idea that some imprisoned monsters were trying to release themselves from their bondage, with shrieks and groans, and cries of agony and despair at the futility of their efforts. Sometimes there were at least seven spots on the borders of the lake where the molten lava dashed up furiously against the rocks—seven fire fountains playing at the same time.

I had for some time been feeling very hot and uncomfortable, and on looking round, the cause was at once apparent. Not two inches beneath the surface, the gray lava on which we were standing and sitting was red hot. A stick thrust through it caught fire, a piece of paper was immediately destroyed, and the gentlemen found the heat from the crevices so great that they could not approach near enough to light their pipes.

One more long last look, and then we turned our faces away from the scene that had enthralled us for so many hours. The whole of the lava we had crossed in the extinct crater was now aglow in many patches, and in all directions flames were bursting forth, fresh lava flowing, and steam and smoke were issuing from the surface.

It was a toilsome journey back again, walking as we did in single file, and obeying the strict charges of our head guide to follow him closely, and to tread exactly in his footsteps. On the whole, it was easier by night than by day to distinguish the route to be taken, as we could now see the dangers that before we could only feel; and many were the fiery crevices we stepped over and jumped across. Once I slipped, and my foot sank through the thin crust. Sparks issued from the ground, and the stick on which I leaned caught fire before I could fairly recover myself.

—LADY BRASSEY.

[Footnote: Note the purely objective description. What colors predominate? Point out the similes in use. Do they heighten the picture? Does the author succeed in giving a clear picture of the volcano?]

THE FETISH

Before this remonstrance was finished, Maggie was already out of hearing, making her way towards the great attic that ran under the old high−pitched roof, shaking the water from her black locks as she ran, like a Skye terrier escaped from his bath. This attic was Maggie's favorite retreat on a wet day, when the weather was not too cold; here she fretted out all her ill−humors, and talked aloud to the worm−eaten floors and the worm−eaten shelves, and the dark rafters festooned with cobwebs; and here she kept a Fetish [Footnote: Fetish (also spelt “fetich"): a material object, venerated by certain African tribes; a sort of idol, which is sometimes punished by its owner in disappointment or anger.] which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was the trunk of a large wooden doll, which once stared with the roundest of eyes above the reddest of cheeks, but was now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious [Footnote: Vicarious: suffered or performed in place of another.] suffering. Three nails driven into the head commemorated as many crises in Maggie's nine years of earthly struggle; that luxury of vengeance having been suggested to her by the picture of Jael [Footnote: Jael: referring to the story of how Jael drove the nail into the forehead of Sisera. *Judges* IV: 17 to 22.] destroying Sisera in the old Bible. The last nail had been driven in with a fiercer stroke than usual, for the Fetish on that occasion represented Aunt Glegg. But immediately afterwards Maggie had reflected that if she drove many nails in, she would not be so well able to fancy that the head was hurt, when she knocked it against the wall, nor to comfort it, and make believe to poultice it, when her fury was abated; for even Aunt Glegg would be pitiable when she had been hurt very much, and thoroughly humiliated, so as to beg her niece's pardon. Since then she had driven no more nails in, but had soothed herself by alternately grinding and beating the wooden head against the rough brick of the great chimneys that made two square pillars supporting the roof. That was what she did this morning on reaching the attic, sobbing all the while with a passion that expelled every other form of consciousness,—even the memory of the grievance that had caused it. As at last the sobs were getting quieter, and the grinding less fierce, a sudden beam of sunshine, falling through the wire lattice across the worm−eaten shelves, made her throw away the Fetish and run to the window. The sun was really breaking out; the sound of the mill seemed cheerful again; the granary doors were open; and there was Yap, the queer white−and−brown terrier, with one ear turned back, trotting about and sniffing vaguely, as if he were in search of a companion. It was irresistible. Maggie tossed her hair back and ran downstairs, seized her bonnet without putting it on, peeped, and then dashed along the passage lest she should encounter her mother, and was quickly out in the yard, whirling round like a Pythoness, and singing as she whirled, “Yap, Yap, Tom's coming home!” while Yap danced and barked round her, as much as to say, if there was any noise wanted he was the dog for it.

—GEORGE ELIOT.

[Footnote: What traits of character does Maggie show? Do children think of their dolls as alive? Or as representing people they know? Did you ever have the impulse to “take your spite out” on something, animate or inanimate? Did you feel any better for relieving your feelings so? There is an interesting account of a savage beating his idol in Melville's “Typee.”]

SALMON FISHING IN IRELAND

The pool has been cut through a peat bog, [Footnote: Peat−bog. Peat is a kind of turf that is used for fuel.] and the greater part of it is twenty feet deep. A broad fringe of water−lilies lines the banks, leaving, however, an available space for throwing a fly upon between them. This is the great resting−place of the fish on their way to the lake and the upper river. The water is high, and almost flowing over the bog. The wind catches it fairly, tearing along the surface and sweeping up the crisp waves in white clouds of spray. The party of strangers who had cards to fish were before us, but they are on the wrong side, trying vainly to send their flies in the face of the southwester, which whirls their casting−lines back over their heads. They have caught a peal [Footnote: Peal: a small salmon.] or two, and one of them reports that he was broken by a tremendous fish at the end of the round−pool. Jack directs them to a bend higher up, where they will find a second pool as good as this one, with a more favorable slant of wind, while I put my rod together and turn over the leaves of my fly−book. Among the marvels of art and nature I know nothing equal to a salmon−fly. It resembles no insect, winged or unwinged, which the fish can have seen. A shrimp, perhaps, is the most like it, if there are degrees to utter dissimilarity. Yet every river is supposed to have its favorite flies. Size, color, shape, all are peculiar. Here vain tastes prevail for golden pheasant and blue and crimson paroquet. There the salmon are as sober as Quakers, and will look at nothing but drabs and browns. Nine parts of this are fancy, but there is still a portion of truth in it. Bold hungry fish will take anything in any river; shy fish will undoubtedly rise and splash at a stranger's fly, while they will swallow what is offered them by any one who knows their ways. It may be something in the color of the water: it may be something in the color of the banks: experience is too uniform to allow the fact itself to be questioned. Under Jack's direction, I select small flies about the size of green drakes: one a sombre gray, with a silver twist about him, a claret hackle, [Footnote: Claret hackle. A hackle is an artificial fly made of feathers.] a mallard wing, [Footnote: Mallard wing. A mallard is the drake of the wild duck. The artificial fly imitates its wing.] streaked faintly on the lower side with red and blue. The drop fly is still darker, with purple legs and olive green wings and body.

We move to the head of the pool and begin to cast in the gravelly shallows, on which the fish lie to feed in a flood, a few yards above the deep water. A white trout or two rise, and presently I am fast in something which excites momentary hopes. The heavy rod bends to the butt. A yard or two of line runs out, but a few seconds show that it is only a large trout which has struck at the fly with his tail, and has been hooked foul. He cannot break me, and I do not care if he escapes, so I bear hard upon him and drag him by main force to the side, where Harper slips the net under his head, and the next moment he is on the bank. Two pounds within an ounce or so, but clean run from the sea, brought up by last night's flood, and without a stain of the bog−water on the pure silver of his scales. He has disturbed the shallow, so we move a few steps down.

There is an alder bush on the opposite side, where the strength of the river is running. It is a long cast. The wind is blowing so hard that I can scarcely keep my footing, and the gusts whirl so unsteadily that I cannot hit the exact spot where, if there is a salmon in the neighborhood, he is lying.

The line flies out straight at last, but I have now thrown a few inches too far; my tail fly is in the bush, dangling across an overhanging bough. An impatient movement, a jerk, or a straight pull, and I am “hung up,” as is the phrase, and delayed for half an hour at least. Happily there is a lull in the storm. I shake the point of the rod. The vibration runs along the line; the fly drops softly like a leaf upon the water—and as it floats away something turns heavily, and a huge brown back is visible for an instant through a rift in the surface. But the line comes home. He was an old stager, as we could see by his color, no longer ravenous as when fresh from the salt−water. He was either lazy and missed the fly, or it was not entirely to his mind. He was not touched, and we drew back to consider. “Over him again while he is angry,” is the saying in some rivers, and I have known it to answer where the fish feed greedily. But it will not do here; we must give him time; and we turn again to the fly−book. When a salmon rises at a small fly as if he meant business, yet fails to take it, the rule is to try another of the same pattern a size larger. This too, however, just now Jack thinks unfavorably of. The salmon is evidently a very large one, and will give us enough to do if we hook him. He therefore, as one precaution, takes off the drop fly lest it catch in the water−lilies. He next puts the knots of the casting−line through a severe trial; replaces an unsound joint

with a fresh link of gut, and finally produces out of his hat a “hook”—he will not call it a fly—of his own dressing. It is a particolored father−long−legs, a thing which only some frantic specimen of orchid ever seriously approached, a creature whose wings were two strips of the fringe of a peacock's tail, whose legs descended from blue jay through red to brown, and terminated in a pair of pink trailers two inches long. Jack had found it do, and he believed it would do for me. And so it did. I began to throw again six feet above the bush, for a salmon often shifts his ground after rising. One cast—a second—another trout rises which we receive with an anathema, [Footnote: Anathema: a curse.] and drag the fly out of his reach. The fourth throw there is a swirl like the wave which arises under the blade of an oar, a sharp sense of hard resistance, a pause, and then a rush for dear life. The wheel shrieks, the line hisses through the rings, and thirty yards down the pool the great fish springs madly six feet into the air. The hook is firm in his upper jaw; he had not shaken its hold, for the hook had gone into the bone—pretty subject of delight for a reasonable man, an editor of a magazine, and a would−be philosopher, turned fifty! The enjoyments of the unreasoning part of us cannot be defended on grounds of reason, and experience shows that men who are all logic and morals, and have nothing of the animal left in them, are poor creatures after all.

Any way, I defy philosophy with a twenty−pound salmon fast hooked, and a pool right ahead four hundred yards long and half full of water−lilies. “Keep him up the strame,” shrieked a Paddy, who, on the screaming of the wheel, had flung down his spade in the turf bog and rushed up to see the sport. “Keep him up the strame, your honor—bloody wars! you'll lost him else.” We were at fault, Jack and I. We did not understand why down stream was particularly dangerous, and Pat was too eager and too busy swearing to explain himself. Alas, his meaning became soon but too intelligible. I had overtaken the fish on the bank and had wheeled in the line again, but he was only collecting himself for a fresh rush, and the next minute it seemed as if the bottom had been knocked out of the pool and an opening made into infinity. Round flew the wheel again; fifty yards were gone in as many seconds, the rod was bending double, and the line pointed straight down; straight as if there was a lead at the end of it and unlimited space in which to sink. “Ah, didn't I tell ye so?” said Pat; “what will we do now?” Too late Jack remembered that fourteen feet down at the bottom of that pool lay the stem of a fallen oak, below which the water had made a clear channel. The fish had turned under it, and whether he was now up the river or down, or where he was who could tell? He stopped at last. “Hold him hard,” said Jack, hurling off his clothes, and while I was speculating whether it would be possible to drag him back the way that he had gone, a pink body flashed from behind me, bounded off the bank with a splendid header, and disappeared. He was under for a quarter of a minute; when he rose he had the line in his hand between the fish and the tree.

“All right,” he sputtered, swimming with the other hand to the bank and scrambling up. “Run the rest of the line off the reel and out through the rings.” He had divined by a brilliant instinct the only remedy for our situation. The thing was done, fast as Pat and I could ply our fingers. The loose end was drawn round the log, and while Jack was humoring the fish with his hand, and dancing up and down the bank regardless of proprieties, we had carried it back down the rings, replaced it on the reel, wound in the slack, and had again command of the situation.

The salmon had played his best stroke. It had failed him, and he now surrendered like a gentleman. A mean−spirited fish will go to the bottom, bury himself in the weed, and sulk. Ours set his head towards the sea, and sailed down the length of the pool in the open water without attempting any more plunges. As his strength failed, he turned heavily on his back, and allowed himself to be drawn to the shore. The gaff [Footnote: Gaff: a large hook fixed on the end of a pole or handle.] was in his side and he was ours. He was larger than we had guessed him. Clean run he would have weighed twenty−five pounds. The fresh water had reduced him to twenty−two, but without softening his muscle or touching his strength.

—JAMES FROUDE (adapted).

[Footnote: Is the first part of the narrative a typical story of “fisherman's luck”? Show how the story illustrates that a real lover of fishing is enthusiastic over every detail of his experience. Is the story technical at the expense of the reader's interest? How does the element of suspense add to the interest? Is the account more interesting by being told in the first person? Why?]

ACROSS RUNNING WATER

At a running water, that comes out at a place called Srath−namara, near the sea−gates of Loch Suibhne, there is a pool called the Pool of the Changeling. None ever goes that way from choice, for only the crying of the curlew is heard there, or the querulous wailing lapwing.

It was here that one night, in a September of many storms, a woman stood staring at the sea. The screaming seamews [Footnote: Seamews: gulls.] wheeled and sank and circled overhead, and the solanders [Footnote: Solanders: a kind of wild geese.] rose with heavy wing and hoarse cries, and the black scarts screeched to the startled guillemots [Footnote: Guillemots: birds similar to the auks.] or to the foam−white terns [Footnote: Terns: a species of birds allied to the gulls.] blown before the wind like froth. The woman looked neither at the seafowl nor at the burning glens of scarlet flame which stretched dishevelled among the ruined lands of the sunset.

Between the black flurries of the wind, striking the sea like flails, came momentary pauses or long silences. In one of these the woman raised her arms, she the while unheeding the cold tide wash about her feet, where she stood insecurely on the wet slippery tangle.

Seven years ago this woman had taken the one child she had, that she did not believe to be her own but a changeling, and had put it on the shore at the extreme edge of the tide−reach, and had left it for the space of an hour. When she came back, the child she had left with a numbness on its face and with the curse of dumbness, was laughing wild, and when she came near, it put out its arms and gave the cry of the young of birds. She lifted the “leanav” in her arms and stared into its eyes, but there was no longer the weary blankness, and the little one yearned with the petulant laughing and idle whimpering of the children of other mothers. And that mother there gave a cry of joy, and with a singing heart went home.

It was in the seventh year after that finding by the sea, that one day, when a cold wind was blowing from the west, the child Morag came in by the peat−fire, where her mother was boiling the porridge, and looked at her without speaking. The mother turned at that, and looked at Morag. Her heart sank like a pool−lily at shadow, when she saw that Morag had woven a wreath of brown tangled seaweed into her hair. But that was nothing to the bite in her breast when the girl began singing a song that had not a word in it she had ever heard on her own or other lips, but was wild as the sound of the tide calling in dark nights of cloud and wind, or as the sudden coming of waves over a quiet sea in the silence of the black hours of sleep.

“What is it, Morag−mo−run?” she asked, her voice like a reed in the wind.

“It's time,” says Morag, with a change in her eyes, and her face shining with a gleam on it.

“Time for what, Morag?”

“For me to be going back to the place I came from.”

“And where will that be?”

“Where would it be but to the place you took me out of, and called across?”

The mother gave a cry and a sob. “Sure, now, Morag−a−ghraidh, you will be my own lass and no other?”

“Whist, woman,” answered the girl; “don't you hear the laughing in the burn, [Footnote: Burn: a small stream.] and the hoarse voice out in the sea?”

“That I do not, O Morag−mo−chridh, and sure it's black sorrow to you and to me hearing that hoarse voice and that thin laughing.”

“Well, sorrow or no sorrow, I'm off now, poor woman. [Footnote: Poor woman: a friendly term of address in Ireland.] And it's good−bye, and a good−bye to you I'll be saying to you, poor woman. Sure it's a sorrow to me to leave you in grief, but if you'll go down to the edge of the water, at the place you took me from, where the runnin' water falls into the sea−pool, you'll be having there against your breast in no time the child of your own that I never was and never could be.”

“And why that, and why that, O Morag, lennavanmo?”

“Peace on your sorrow, woman, and good−bye to you now;” and with that the sea−changeling went laughing out at the door, singing a wave−song that was so wild and strange the mother's woe was turned to a fear that rose like chill water in her heart.

When she dared follow—and why she did not go at once she did not know—she saw at first no sight of Morag

or any other on the lonely shore. In vain she called, with a great sorrowing cry. But as, later, she stood with her feet in the sea, she became silent of a sudden, and was still as a rock, with her ragged dress about her like draggled seaweed. She had heard a thin crying. It was the voice of a breast−child, and not of a grown lass like Morag.

When a gray heron toiled sullenly from a hollow among the rocks she went to the place. She was still now, with a frozen sorrow. She knew what she was going to find. But she did not guess till she lifted that little frail child she had left upon the shore seven years back, that the secret people of the sea or those who call across running water could have the hardness and coldness to give her again the unsmiling dumb thing she had mothered with so much bitterness of heart.

Morag she never saw again, nor did any other see her, except Padruig Macrae, the innocent, who on a New Year's eve, that was a Friday, said that as he was whistling to a seal down by the Pool at Srath−na−mara he heard someone laughing at him; and when he looked to see who it was he saw it was no other than Morag—and he had called to her, he said, and she called back to him, “Come away, Padruig dear,” and then had swum off like a seal, crying the heavy tears of sorrow.

And as for the child she had found again on the place she had left her own silent breast−babe seven years back; it never gave a cry or made any sound whatever, but stared with round, strange eyes only, and withered away in three days, and was hidden by her in a sand−hole at the root of a stunted thorn that grew there.

At every going down of the sun thereafter, the mother of the changeling went to the edge of the sea, and stood among the wet tangle of the wrack, [Footnote: Wrack: coarse seaweed.] and put out her supplicating hands, but never spoke word nor uttered cry.

But on this night of September, while the gleaming sea−fowl were flying through the burning glens of scarlet flame in the wide purple wildness of the sky, with the wind falling and wailing and wailing and falling, the woman went over to the running water beyond the seapool, and put her skirt over her head and stepped into the pool, and, hooded thus and thus patient, waited till the tide came in.

—FIONA MACLEOD.

[Footnote: Notice how the author describes the wildness of nature so as to make it seem in sympathy with the strangeness of the human story. Pick out words and passages that convey this as: “screaming seamews,” “screeched,” “dishevelled,” “black flurries,” etc. Have you ever read any stories or fairy tales that tell about changelings? Among what kind of people would a story like this be believed? Read Yeats, “The Land of Hearts' Desire” and compare with this story. Is the story too fantastic to gain the reader's sympathy?]

THE PINE−TREE SHILLINGS

The Captain John Hull aforesaid was the mint−master of Massachusetts, and coined all the money that was made there. This was a new line of business; for, in the earlier days of the colony, the current coinage consisted of gold and silver money of England, and Portugal, and Spain. These coins being scarce, the people were often forced to barter their commodities instead of selling them.

For instance, if a man wanted to buy a coat, he perhaps exchanged a bear−skin for it. If he wished for a barrel of molasses, he might purchase it with a pile of pine boards. Musket−bullets were used instead of farthings. The Indians had a sort of money, called wampum, which was made of clam−shells; and this strange sort of specie was likewise taken in payment of debts by the English settlers. Bank−bills had never been heard of. There was not money enough of any kind, in many parts of the country, to pay the salaries of the ministers; so that they sometimes had to take quintals [Footnote: Quintals: hundredweights.] of fish, bushels of corn, or cords of wood, instead of silver or gold.

As the people grew more numerous, and their trade one with another increased, the want of current money was still more sensibly felt. To supply the demand, the General Court passed a law for establishing a coinage of shillings, sixpences, and threepences. [Footnote: Shillings: Sixpences, and three−pences. What country did use and still uses this system?] Captain John Hull was appointed to manufacture this money, and was to have about one shilling out of every twenty to pay him for the trouble of making them.

Hereupon all the old silver in the colony was handed over to Captain John Hull. The battered silver cans and tankards, [Footnote: Tankards: large drinking vessels.] I suppose, and silver buckles, and broken spoons, and silver buttons of wornout coats, and silver hilts of swords that had figured at court,—all such curious old articles were doubtless thrown into the melting pot together. But by far the greater part of the silver consisted of bullion [Footnote: Bullion: uncoined gold or silver in the mass.] from the mines of South America, which the English buccaneers [Footnote: Buccaneers: pirates.]—who were little better than pirates—had taken from the Spaniards, and brought to Massachusetts. All this old and new silver being melted down and coined, the result was an immense amount of splendid shillings, sixpences, and threepences. Each had the date, 1652, on the one side, and the figure of a pine−tree on the other. Hence they were called pine−tree shillings. And for every twenty shillings that he coined, you will remember, Captain John Hull was entitled to put one shilling into his own pocket.

The magistrates soon began to suspect that the mint−master would have the best of the bargain. They offered him a large sum of money if he would but give up the twentieth shilling which he was continually dropping into his own pocket. But Captain Hull declared himself perfectly satisfied with the shilling. And well he might be; for so diligently did he labor that, in a few years, his pockets, his money−bags, and his strong box were overflowing with pine−tree shillings. This was probably the case when he came into possession of Grandfather's chair; and, as he had worked so hard at the mint, it was certainly proper that he should have a comfortable chair to rest himself in.

When the mint−master had grown rich, a young man, Samuel Sewell by name, came a−courting to his only daughter. His daughter—whose name I do not know, but we will call her Betsey—was a fine, hearty damsel, by no means so slender as some young ladies of our own days. On the contrary, having always fed heartily on pumpkin−pies, doughnuts, Indian puddings, and other Puritan dainties, she was as round, and plump as a pudding herself. With this round, rosy Miss Betsey did Samuel Sewell fall in love. As he was a young man of good character, industrious in his business, and a member of the church, the mint−master very readily gave his consent.

“Yes, you may take her,” said he, in his rough way, “and you'll find her a heavy burden enough!”

On the wedding day, we may suppose that honest John Hull dressed himself in a plum−colored coat, all the buttons of which were made of pine−tree shillings. The buttons of his waistcoat were sixpences; and the knees of his smallclothes [Footnote: Smallclothes: knee breeches.] were buttoned with silver threepences. Thus attired, he sat with great dignity in Grandfather's chair; and, being a portly old gentleman, he completely filled it from elbow to elbow. On the opposite side of the room, between her bridemaids, sat Miss Betsey. She was blushing with all her might, and looked like a full−blown peony, or a great red apple.

There, too, was the bridegroom, dressed in a fine purple coat and gold−lace waistcoat, with as much other

finery as the Puritan laws and customs would allow him to put on. His hair was cropped close to his head, because Governor Endicott [Footnote: Governor Endicott: governor of the Massachusetts colony from 1647 to 1665.] had forbidden any man to wear it below the ears. But he was a very personable young man; and so thought the bridemaids and Miss Betsey herself.

The mint−master also was pleased with his new son−in−law; especially as he had courted Miss Betsey out of pure love, and had said nothing at all about her portion. So, when the marriage ceremony was over, Captain Hull whispered a word to two of his men−servants, who immediately went out, and soon returned, lugging in a large pair of scales. There were such a pair as wholesale merchants use for weighing bulky commodities; and quite a bulky commodity was now to be weighed in them.

“Daughter Betsey,” said the mint−master, “get into one side of these scales.”

Miss Betsey—or Mrs. Sewell, as we must now call her—did as she was bid, like a dutiful child, without any question of the why and wherefore. But what her father could mean, unless to make her husband pay for her by the pound (in which case she would have been a dear bargain), she had not the least idea.

“And now,” said honest John Hull to the servants, “bring that box hither.”

The box to which the mint−master pointed was a huge square, iron−bound, oaken chest; it was big enough, my children, for all four of you to play hide−and−seek in. The servants tugged with might and main, but could not lift this enormous receptacle, and were finally obliged to drag it across the floor. Captain Hull then took a key from his girdle, unlocked the chest, and lifted its ponderous lid. Behold! it was full to the brim of bright pine−tree shillings, fresh from the mint; and Samuel Sewell began to think that his father−in−law had got possession of all the money in the Massachusetts treasury. But it was only the mint−master's honest share of the coinage.

Then the servants, at Captain Hull's command, heaped double handfuls of shillings into one side of the scales, while Betsey remained in the other. Jingle, jingle, went the shillings, as handful after handful was thrown in, till, plump and ponderous as she was, they fairly weighed the young lady from the floor.

“There, son Sewell!” cried the honest mint−master, resuming his seat in Grandfather's chair, “take these shillings for my daughter's portion. Use her kindly, and thank Heaven for her. It is not every wife that's worth her weight in silver!”

—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

[Footnote: Notice the kindly quality of the humor. Do you know any other stories written in this vein? Does the author seem to think that Miss Betsey's charms or her money were her attraction?]

THE WHITE TRAIL

For the space of nearly ten weeks these people travelled thus in the region of the Kabinikagam. Sometimes they made long marches; sometimes they camped for the hunting; sometimes the great, fierce storms of the north drove them to shelter, snowed them under, and passed on shrieking. The wind opposed them. At first of little account, its very insistence gave it value. Always the stinging snow whirling into the face; always the eyes watering and smarting; always the unyielding opposition against which to bend the head; always the rush of sound in the ears,—a distraction against which the senses had to struggle before they could take their needed cognisance of trail and of game. An uneasiness was abroad with the wind, an uneasiness that infected the men, the dogs, the forest creatures, the very insentient trees themselves. It racked the nerves. In it the inimical Spirit of the North seemed to find its plainest symbol; though many difficulties she cast in the way were greater to be overcome.

Ever the days grew shorter. The sun swung above the horizon, low to the south, and dipped back as though pulled by some invisible string. Slanting through the trees it gave little cheer and no warmth. Early in the afternoon it sank, silhouetting the pointed firs, casting across the snow long, crimson shadows, which faded into gray. It was replaced by a moon, chill and remote, dead as the white world on which it looked.

In the great frost continually the trees were splitting with loud, sudden reports. The cold had long since squeezed the last drops of moisture from the atmosphere. It was metallic, clear, hard as ice, brilliant as the stars, compressed with the freezing. The moon, the stars, the earth, the very heavens glistened like polished steel. Frost lay on the land thick as a coverlid. It hid the east like clouds of smoke. Snow remained unmelted two feet from the camp−fire.

And the fire alone saved these people from the enemy. If Sam stooped for a moment to adjust his snow−shoe strap, he straightened his back with a certain reluctance,—already the benumbing preliminary to freezing had begun. If Dick, flipping his mitten from his hand to light his pipe, did not catch the fire at the second tug, he had to resume the mitten and beat the circulation into his hand before renewing the attempt, lest the ends of his fingers become frosted. Movement, always and incessantly, movement alone could keep going the vital forces on these few coldest days until the fire had been built to fight back the white death.

It was the land of ghosts. Except for the few hours at midday these people moved in the gloom and shadow of a nether world. The long twilight was succeeded by longer night, with its burnished stars, its dead moon, its unearthly aurora. On the fresh snow were the tracks of creatures, but in the flesh they glided almost invisible. The ptarmigan's [Footnote: Ptarmigan: a species of grouse that is brown in summer but turns white, or nearly white, in winter.] bead eye alone betrayed him, he had no outline. The ermine's black tip was the only indication of his presence. Even the larger animals—the caribou, the moose—had either turned a dull gray, or were so rimed by the frost as to have lost all appearance of solidity. It was ever a surprise to find these phantoms red, to discover that their flesh would resist the knife. During the strife of the heavy northwest storms one side of each tree had become more or less plastered with snow, so that even their dark trunks flashed mysteriously into and out of view. In the entire world of the great white silence the only solid, enduring, palpable reality was the tiny sledge train crawling with infinite patience across its vastness.

White space, a feeling of littleness and impotence, twilight gloom, burnished night, bitter cold, unreality, phantasmagoria, [Footnote: Phantasmagoria: illusive images.] ghosts like those which surged about Aeneas, [Footnote: Ghosts about Aeneas: referring to the descent of Aeneas into Hades as told in Virgil's “Aeneid.”] and finally clogging, white silence,—these were the simple but dreadful elements of that journey which lasted, without event, from the middle of November until the latter part of January.

—STEWART EDWARD WHITE.

[Footnote: What is the effect of the repeated use of “always” in the first paragraph? Cite the passages that help most in giving you a clear picture of the scene. What effect is produced by the absence of color in the description? Why does the author use almost entirely the short sentences? What possibilities of tragedy are hinted at in the narrative? How is the sense of silence and isolation conveyed?]

A DISSERTATION ON ROAST PIG

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing it or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius [Footnote: Confucius: a celebrated Chinese philosopher, born about 550 B.C.] in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho−fang, literally the Cooks' holiday.

The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd, Ho−ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast [Footnote: Mast−acorns: nuts.] for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo−bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers [Footnote: Younkers: youngsters.] of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of young pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs [Footnote: China pigs. What adjective would we use now?] have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of.

Bo−bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced.

What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelled that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think.

He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burned his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted —crackling! [Footnote: Crackling: the brown crisp rind of roasted pork.] Again he felt and fumbled at the pig.

It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit.

The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself to the newborn pleasure, he fell to tearing whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo−bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters.

His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued:—

“You graceless fellow, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burned down three houses with your dog's tricks, but you must be eating fire and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?”

“O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.”

The ears of Ho−ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should have a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo−bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho−ti, still shouting out, “Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste,”—with such like ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho−ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his

son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo−bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho−ti's cottage was burned down now more frequently than ever.

Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night−time. And Ho−ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever.

At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. [Footnote: Assize town: the place where the court sits to conduct trials.] Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box.

He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo−bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which the judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world.

Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, [Footnote: Locke: John Locke, a celebrated English philosopher of the seventeenth century.] who made a discovery, that flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (burnt, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron.

Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.

—CHARLES LAMB.

[Footnote: In this essay where does the humor lie? Is it in the absurdity of the story told? In the exaggerations? What stories, of those you have studied, does this most resemble? Why? Notice how bare the story is of any description except that which is essential to the theme. What is the effect of this? Does the author describe the taste of roast pig sympathetically? Does any article of food arouse your enthusiasm? If so, try writing an essay on it. Why does the author introduce such incongruous terms as “foreman of the jury,” “jury box,” “insurance offices”?]

THE LAST CLASS

I was very late for school that morning, and I was afraid of being scolded, especially as Monsieur Hamel had told us that he should examine us on participles, and I did not know the first thing about them. For a moment I thought of staying away from school and wandering about the fields. It was such a warm, lovely day. I could hear the blackbirds whistling on the edge of the wood, and in the Rippert field, behind the sawmill, the Prussians going through their drill. [Footnote: Prussians going through their drill. The time of the story is laid at the end of the Franco−Prussian War.] All that was much more tempting to me than the rules concerning participles; but I had the strength to resist, and I ran as fast as I could to school. As I passed the Mayor's office, I saw that there were people gathered about the little board on which notices were posted. For two years all our bad news had come from that board—battles lost, conscriptions, [Footnote: Conscription: compulsory enrollment for military service.] orders from headquarters; and I thought without stopping:

"What can it be now?"

Then, as I ran across the square, Wachter the blacksmith, who stood there with his apprentice, reading the placard, called out to me:

"Don't hurry so, my boy; you'll get to your school soon enough!"

I thought that he was making fun of me, and I ran into Monsieur Hamel's little yard all out of breath.

Usually, at the beginning of school, there was a great uproar which could be heard in the street, desks opening and closing, lessons repeated aloud in unison, with our ears stuffed in order to learn quicker, and the teacher's stout ruler beating on the desk:

"A little more quiet!"

I counted on all this noise to reach my bench unnoticed, but as it happened, that day everything was quiet, like a Sunday morning. Through the open window I saw my comrades already in their places, and Monsieur Hamel walking back and forth with the terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and enter, in the midst of that perfect silence. You can imagine whether I blushed and whether I was afraid!

But no! Monsieur Hamel looked at me with no sign of anger and said very gently:

"Go at once to your seat, my little Frantz; we were going to begin without you."

I stepped over the bench and sat down at once at my desk. Not until then, when I had partly recovered from my fright, did I notice that our teacher had on his handsome blue coat, his plaited ruff, and the black embroidered breeches, which he wore on days of inspection or of distribution of prizes. Moreover, there was something extraordinary, something solemn about the whole class. But what surprised me most was to see at the back of the room, on the benches which were usually empty, some people from the village sitting, as silent as we were: old Hauser with his three−cornered hat, the ex−mayor, the ex−postman, and others besides. They all seemed depressed; and Hauser had brought an old spelling−book with gnawed edges, which he held wide−open on his knee, with his great spectacles askew.

While I was wondering at all this, Monsieur Hamel had mounted his platform, and in the same gentle and serious voice with which he had welcomed me, he said to us:

"My children, this is the last time that I shall teach you. Orders have come from Berlin to teach nothing but German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new teacher arrives to−morrow. This is the last class in French, so I beg you to be very attentive."

Those few words overwhelmed me. Ah! the villains! that was what they had posted at the mayor's office.

My last class in French!

And I barely knew how to write! So I should never learn! I must stop short where I was! How angry I was with myself because of the time I had wasted, the lessons I had missed, running about after nests, or sliding on the Saar! [Footnote: Saar: a river just beyond the northeast border line of the province of Lorraine.] My books, which only a moment before I thought so tiresome, so heavy to carry—my grammar, my sacred history—seemed to me now like old friends, from whom I should be terribly grieved to part. And it was the same about Monsieur Hamel. The thought that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget the punishments, the blows with the ruler.

Poor man! It was in honor of that last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes; and I understood now why those old fellows from the village were sitting at the end of the room. It seemed to mean that they regretted not having come oftener to the school. It was also a way of thanking our teacher for his forty years of faithful service, and of paying their respects to the fatherland which was vanishing.

I was at that point in my reflections, when I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say from the beginning to the end that famous rule about participles, in a loud, distinct voice, without a slip! But I got mixed up at the first words, and I stood there swaying against my bench, with a full heart, afraid to raise my head. I heard Monsieur Hamel speaking to me:

"I will not scold you, my little Frantz; you must be punished enough; that is the way it goes; every day we say to ourselves: 'Pshaw! I have time enough. I will learn to−morrow.' And then you see what happens. Ah! it has been the great misfortune of our Alsace always to postpone its lessons until to−morrow. 'What! you claim to be French, and you can neither speak nor write your language!' In all this, my poor Frantz, you are not the guiltiest one. We all have our fair share of reproaches to address to ourselves.

"Your parents have not been careful enough to see that you were educated. They preferred to send you to work in the fields or in the factories, in order to have a few more sous. And have I nothing to reproach myself for? Have I not often made you water my garden instead of studying? And when I wanted to go fishing for trout, have I ever hesitated to dismiss you?"

Then passing from one thing to another, Monsieur Hamel began to talk to us about the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world, the most clear, the most substantial; that we must always retain it among ourselves, and never forget it, because when a people falls into servitude, "so long as it clings to its language, it is as if it held the key to its prison." Then he took the grammar and read us our lesson. I was amazed to see how readily I understood. Everything that he said seemed so easy to me, so easy. I believed, too, that I had never listened so closely, and that he, for his part, had never been so patient with his explanations. One would have said that, before going away, the poor man desired to give us all his knowledge, to force it all into our heads at a single blow.

When the lesson was at an end, we passed to writing. For that day Monsieur Hamel had prepared some entirely new examples, on which was written in a fine, round hand: "France, Alsace, France, Alsace." They were like little flags, waving all about the class, hanging from the rods of our desks. You should have seen how hard we all worked and how silent it was! Nothing could be heard save the grinding of the pens over the paper. At one time some cockchafers [Footnote: Cockchafers: a species of beetle.] flew in; but no one paid any attention to them not even the little fellows, who were struggling with their straight lines, with a will and conscientious application, as if even the lines were French. On the roof of the schoolhouse, pigeons cooed in low tones, and I said to myself as I listened to them:

"I wonder if they are going to compel them to sing German too!"

From time to time, when I raised my eyes from my paper, I saw Monsieur Hamel sitting motionless in his chair and staring at the objects about him as if he wished to carry away in his glance the whole of his little schoolhouse. Think of it! For forty years he had been there in the same place, with his yard in front of him and his class just as it was! But the benches and desks were polished and rubbed by use; the walnuts in the yard had grown, and the hop−vine which he himself had planted now festooned the windows even to the roof. What a heartrending thing it must have been for that poor man to leave all those things, and to hear his sister walking back and forth in the room overhead, packing their trunks! For they were to go away the next day—to leave the province forever.

However, he had the courage to keep the class to the end. After the writing, we had the lesson in history; then the little ones sang all together the ba, be, bi, bo, bu. Yonder, at the back of the room, old Hauser had put on his spectacles, and, holding his spelling−book in both hands, he spelled out the letters with them. I could see that he too was applying himself. His voice shook with emotion, and it was so funny to hear him, that we all longed to laugh and to cry. Ah! I shall remember that last class.

Suddenly the church struck twelve, then the Angelus [Footnote: Angelus: the angelus bell, which is rung at morning, noon, and night.] rang. At the same moment, the bugles of the Prussians returning from drill blared under our windows. Monsieur Hamel rose, pale as death, from his chair. Never had he seemed to me so tall.

"My friends," he said, "my friends, I—I—"

But something suffocated him. He could not finish the sentence.

Thereupon he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, bearing on with all his might, he wrote in the largest letters he could:

"Vive La France!" [Footnote: Vive la France: "Long live France."]

Then he stood there with his head resting against the wall, and without speaking, he motioned to us with his hand:

"That is all; go."

—ALPHONSE DAUDET.

[Footnote: Compare this story with "A Leaf in the Storm." What do such stories make you think of "the glory of conquest"? Why was the decree made that this was to be "the last class in French"? Does the author make this story a personal tragedy or the tragedy of France? Where is the climax of the story? Is it effective? What kind of spirit does it show? Does that spirit live in France to−day?]

AN ARAB FISHERMAN

This morning I reached the rocks before the dawn had begun to break. It was too dark to fish; but I crept out to the very edge of the ledge, and sat down beside a great boulder to wait for the light. I lit my pipe and smoked impatiently. It seemed as though the dawn came up out of the water itself; long before I could notice any increase of light the waves began to change color from the dark, oily olive tint of night to a lighter green, and gradually, just as it began to dawn, to their daytime blue. A long trailing cloud, which stretched clean across the sky like an exaggerated Milky Way, suddenly caught fire at its eastern end. Rapidly the red flame along ran its entire length to the other horizon. Then countless unexpected shadows woke up on the rocks about me, weird, undefined shapes, which became clear−cut only when the rim of the sun came up over Cap Rouge.

But a swish in the water beside me, as the first fish rose, recalled me to the business in hand. I opened my little tin tackle−box, put the rod together, and just as I was tying on the flies I was disturbed by human voices. I said several things I shouldn't have, and looked up over my rock to motion back the intruders. For a moment I thought I was back in Old Greece, the Old Greece where early morning fishers were often interrupted by the sea−nymphs. But a second glance reassured me—it was only an Arab and his wife hunting crabs.

Their method was typical. He was a sombre old chap, with long, scanty white beard, a soiled burnous, [Footnote: Burnous: a cloak−like garment with a hood, worn by the Arabs.] and thin, scrawny brown legs. He sat stolidly on a dry rock, a basket under his feet, and—this was the typical part—watched his wife work. I did not blame him for watching. It was a pretty sight. She was a supple young Mauresque, [Footnote: Mauresque: Moorish (girl).] slim and graceful as the water−nymph for whom I had first mistaken her. She had laid aside her outer cloak−like garment, and was clad only in a light cotton tunic. It was very simple affair—two small holes for her arms, a bigger one for her head, and a still bigger one at the bottom to get in by. I could make one myself. It was bound about her waist with a heavy dark red woollen sash, the ends of which, hanging down at her side, were adorned with a most amazing collection of colored strings, bright yellow, startling orange, pale blue, and flaming crimson. It sounds discordant, and I must admit that, as it hangs now in my room, it almost makes my head ache. But out there on the red, wet rocks it was toned down by the faint morning light, and mingled charmingly with the greens on the bank and the far−reaching blue of the sea. In her hand was a spear—a stick sharpened in a fire.

If the old gentleman took it sedately and placidly, it was just the reverse with her. She was fairly running over with the joy of life. She would crawl about deftly until she saw a crab, then she would make a long detour to get it between her and the sun, so that her shadow should not frighten it. When she got within striking distance, she would wave her hand at her husband, as though she thought he could increase the intensity of his silence. With a graceful, dextrous thrust she would stab her game, and, gathering up her scant skirts, she would dash into the water after it. The moment she got her hand on it she would let out a delighted little scream of glee, and go bounding over the rocks to exhibit it to her lord and master. I wanted to wring his scrawny old neck for not being more enthusiastic about it. But he never once lost his blase manner. He would look at the crab a moment critically, then lift up his foot and let her put it in the basket. Not a word would he say. But off she would go again with undimmed ardor. It was a sight for the gods. And for half an hour I forgot all about my fishing−rod.

At last their basket was full, and the old man got up and began to come my way. She picked up her mantle and the basket and followed him. They saw me at the same moment. She gave a startled little squeal and started to retreat; but the old man grunted “Roumi,” so she stopped.

“Roumi,” being translated, means “Infidel.” It was as though he had said, “Don't get excited; it is only a dog.” If I had been a Mussulman, she would have run screaming to the woods, and would have had to do—I don't know what penance—because I had seen her face unveiled. But I was only an infidel dog and didn't count. The old man made the “Sign of Peace,” and the two sat down beside me.

I didn't return his salute. I had never felt so entirely, so shamefully insulted in my life. I have always read a deep contempt for me in the eyes of the Mussulmans I have met. The Arab boy who cleans my boots and cares for “Citron,” my mare, looks down on me from a perfectly unspeakable height of superiority. The men do not matter, but to be insulted so by a woman, a very pretty woman, made my hair crinkle! I had heard that the Mohammedan women do not veil before the infidels. But I had never realized the overpowering weight of the insult before. She

would have been utterly confused if an Arab had seen her face. She sat there before me, almost within reach of my hand, in a thin, short, very short, tunic, which was wet, and she never turned a hair. I was a “Roumi,” not a man, a dog. That was all there was to it. I felt that unless I could shake her composure I would explode. I tried to convince her I was a man by staring at her. I might just as well have tried to embarrass the statue of Venus de Milo!

“Bonjour,” [Footnote: Bonjour: “good day.”] the old man said. He had probably learned French working for a colonist; or perhaps he had served in the Spahis [Footnote: Spahis: Algerian cavalrymen serving in the French army.] when he was younger. I was too mad to return his greeting.

“Fishing?” he asked.

Such insane questions, when the answer is so evident, generally infuriate me; and I probably would have told him I was skating if I had not been afraid he would get mad and walk off with his wife, and I had not yet given up hope of embarrassing her.

“Yes,” I replied. “And you?”

“I've been crab−fishing,” he said solemnly, and he showed me his basket. “I'm a good fisher,” he added.

I looked at his wife, but she did not seem to see anything funny in his choice of pronouns. I tied another fly on my leader.

“No good,” he said. “Use crab meat. Fish don't like feathers.”

I made a couple of casts without making a strike. “No good!” he kept repeating. He began to get on my nerves. At last I had better luck and landed a beautiful three−pounder. I dangled it triumphantly before his eyes.

“No good,” he said stolidly. “Use crab meat. Fish don't like feathers.”

Then I had a run of luck. Almost every cast I got a rise, and soon I had a nice string of eight, all from two to five pounds. I noticed that all the strikes had been on the same fly, so I stopped for a minute to change the other two flies to this variety. I thought that if I should have the luck to raise two at once—as sometimes happens—I might convince him. When I opened the box to get the new flies, both of them came close to look in. In one compartment were some bare hooks on which I had not yet built flies. The old man pounced on them at once.

“There!” he cried. “These are good. Use these with crab meat and you will catch fish!”

I sat back in dumb amazement. Once upon a time, way back in the dimness before history, this chap's ancestors had begun to fish off these rocks with a bent wire and a piece of crab meat. Century after century they had sat there unchanging. Sat there all day long, and had been lucky to catch half as many fish as I had done in fifteen minutes. And glaring ocular demonstration did not shake his faith in the methods of his ancestors. I began to understand the hopeless discouragement with which my host talks of the “Native Question.” The Arabs are starving off because the French have stolen their land. But the fact remains that most of the natives have more land than the colonists. An Arab will starve to death on a piece of land which will support two French families, simply because the Arabs do not know—and will not learn—how to intensify their culture. Somehow—nobody knows just how—the Romans, during the long centuries of their occupation, succeeded in teaching them to put an iron point on the end of the crooked stick with which they scratch the earth. It is the last thing they have learned.

The Arabs employed by my host are good workmen. They seem perfectly intelligent; six days a week they yoke his stout oxen before a great American plow, turn his soil, scatter his fertilizer, after the harvest help him sort out the best grain for the next sowing, and so forth; but the seventh day of the week they hitch their wives beside an ass, and tickle the soil with their iron−pointed stick. “Why should we put on fertilizer?” they ask. “Allah, the Just, will give us the harvest our piety deserves.”

My speculations about the fate of the race were interrupted by the voice of the young woman. Her eye had been caught by a gaudy red−feathered trolling−spoon and its polished brass disk. She pointed to it, and said something in Arabic. The old man shook his head.

“No good” he repeated his deadly refrain.

“Use these. Crab meat. You will catch fish. Fish don't like feathers.”

But I'd lost interest in fishing. I realized that if I pulled up Jonah's whale it would not convince the old man. So I started to put up my things.

—ALBERT EDWARDS.

[Footnote: Note the use of color. What things in the scene should you like to see for yourself? Is the humor of the story one of situation or character? Was the old Arab vain or only stupid? Is his attitude toward the author a

typically Eastern one? Do you know Kipling's ballad, “The East and the West”?]

THE ARCHERY CONTEST

At the beginning of the contest a stranger appears to take part in the shooting. He tells Prince John that his name is Locksley.

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. [Footnote: Lists: fields of combat.] The contending archers took their station in turn, at the bottom of the southern access, the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called a shot at rovers. The archers, having previously determined by lot their order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank, termed the Provost of the Games; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded, had they condescended to superintend the sports of the yeomanry. [Footnote: Yeomanry: the yeomen in England were the freeholders, the class next in order to the gentry.]

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty−four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it, that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

"Now, Locksley," [Footnote: Locksley: a name for Robin Hood who was supposed to have been born in Locksley, Nottinghamshire, about 1160.] said Prince John [Footnote: Prince John was the brother of King Richard, and ruled in England during the time that Richard was absent on the Crusades.] to the bold yeoman with a bitter smile, "wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldric, [Footnote: Baldric: a broad belt worn over one shoulder and under the opposite arm. Drew a long bow at Hastings. The archers of that time used what were called "long bows." The battle of Hastings was fought in 1066, when William of Normandy defeated the English.] and quiver, to the Provost of the sports?"

"Sith it be no better," said Locksley, "I am content to try my fortune; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's he shall be bound to shoot at that which I shall propose."

"That is but fair," answered Prince John, "and it shall not be refused thee. If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver−pennies for thee."

"A man can do but his best," answered Hubert; "but my grandsire drew a good long bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonor his memory."

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping−place was nigh level with his face, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

"You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert," said his antagonist, bending his bow, "or that had been a better shot."

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stept to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

"By the light of heaven!" said Prince John to Hubert, "an' thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!"

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions.

"An' your highness were to hang me," he said, "a man can do but his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow"—

"The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!" interrupted John, "shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worse for thee!"

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the

target.

"A Hubert!" shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. "In the clout!—in the clout!—a Hubert for ever!"

"Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley," said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

"I will notch his shaft for him, however," replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamor. "This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood," whispered the yeomen to each other; "such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

"And now," said Locksley, "I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country; and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best."

He then turned to leave the lists. "Let your guards attend me," he said, "if you please—I go but to cut a rod from the next willow−bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape: but the cry of "Shame! shame!" which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. "For his own part," he said, "and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round−table, [Footnote: King Arthur's round table. This was the famous table, made by the magician Merlin, which was given to King Arthur as a wedding gift by the father of Guinevere. It could seat 150 knights.] which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old," he said, "might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but," added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, "he that hits that rod at five−score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself."

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life,—and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers—or rather I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson's whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see."

"Cowardly dog!" said Prince John.—"Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot, but, if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe'er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill."

"I will do my best, as Hubert says," answered Locksley, "No man can do more."

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill: his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. "These twenty nobles," [Footnote: Twenty nobles. A noble was an old coin worth about one dollar and sixty cents.] he said, "which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our bodyguard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft."

"Pardon me, noble Prince," said Locksley; "but I have vowed, that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother King Richard. [Footnote: King Richard: Richard Coeur de Lion. He was born about 1157 and became king of England in 1189. He reigned until his death in 1199. whittle: a pocket or sheath knife.] These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger, and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

—WALTER SCOTT.

[Footnote: State some qualities of Locksley and Prince John that are brought out in the narrative. What is the effect of Hubert's repetition of the words “my grandsire drew a long bow,” etc.? Can you get any hint of the social conditions at the time of the story? Is there anything in the narrative to suggest the identity of Locksley? Did Robin Hood ever take service with King Richard? Why did Locksley refuse the money?]

BABY SYLVESTER

(The writer has taken up temporary quarters in the cabin of his friend Sylvester, a California miner).

I do not remember how long I slept. I must have been conscious, however, during my slumber, of my inability to keep myself covered by the serape, [Footnote: Serape: a blanket or shawl commonly worn by the Mexicans.] for I awoke once or twice clutching it with a despairing hand as it was disappearing over the foot of the couch. Then I became suddenly aroused to the fact that my efforts to retain it were resisted by some equally persistent force, and letting it go, I was horrified at seeing it swiftly drawn under the couch. At this point I sat up, completely awake; for immediately after, what seemed to be an exaggerated muff began to emerge from under the couch. Presently it appeared fully, dragging the serape after it. There was no mistaking it now—it was a baby bear. A mere suckling, it was true—a helpless roll of fat and fur—but unmistakably, a grizzly cub!

I cannot recall anything more irresistibly ludicrous than its aspect as it slowly raised its small wondering eyes to mine. It was so much taller in its haunches than its shoulders—its fore legs were so disproportionately small—that in walking, its hind feet invariably took precedence. It was perpetually pitching forward over its pointed, inoffensive nose, and recovering itself always, after these involuntary somersaults, with the gravest astonishment. To add to its preposterous appearance, one of its hind feet was adorned by a shoe of Sylvester's, [Footnote: Sylvester: the author's friend in whose cabin he was staying at the time of the story.] into which it had accidentally and inextricably [Footnote: Inextricably: in a hopelessly involved manner.] stepped. As this somewhat impeded its first impulse to fly, it turned to me; and then, possibly recognizing in the stranger, the same species as its master, it paused. Presently, it slowly raised itself on its hind legs, and vaguely and deprecatingly [Footnote: Deprecatingly: regretfully, entreatingly.] waved a baby paw, fringed with little hooks of steel. I took the paw, and shook it gravely. From that moment we were friends. The little affair of the serape was forgotten.

Nevertheless, I was wise enough to cement our friendship by an act of delicate courtesy. Following the direction of his eyes, I had no difficulty in finding, on a shelf near the ridge−pole, the sugar box and the square lumps of white sugar that even the poorest miner is never without. While he was eating them I had time to examine him more closely. His body was a silky, dark, but exquisitely modulated gray, deepening to black in his paws and muzzle. His fur was excessively long, thick, and soft as eider−down, the cushions of flesh beneath perfectly infantine in their texture and contour. He was so very young that the palms of his half−human feet were still tender as a baby's. Except for the bright blue, steely hooks, half sheathed in his little toes, there was not a single harsh outline or detail in his plump figure. He was as free from angles as one of Leda's [Footnote: Leda: the maiden who was wooed by Jupiter in the form of a swan.] offspring. Your caressing hand sank away in his fur with dreamy languor. To look at him long was an intoxication of the senses; to pat him was a wild delirium; to embrace him, an utter demoralization of the intellectual faculties.

When he had finished the sugar he rolled out of the door with a half−diffident, half−inviting look in his eye, as if he expected me to follow. I did so, but the sniffing and snorting of the keen−scented Pomposo [Footnote: Pomposo: the writer's horse.] in the hollow, not only revealed the cause of his former terror, but decided me to take another direction. After a moment's hesitation he concluded to go with me, although I am satisfied, from a certain impish look in his eye, that he fully understood and rather enjoyed the fright of Pomposo. As he rolled along at my side, with a gait not unlike a drunken sailor, I discovered that his long hair concealed a leather collar around his neck, which bore for its legend the single word, “Baby!” I recalled the mysterious suggestion of the two miners. This, then was the “baby” with whom I was to “play.”

How we “played”; how Baby allowed me to roll him downhill, crawling and puffing up again each time, with perfect good humor; how he climbed a young sapling after my Panama hat, which I had “shied” into one of the topmost branches; how after getting it he refused to descend until it suited his pleasure; how when he did come down he persisted in walking about on three legs, carrying my hat, a crushed and shapeless mass, clasped to his breast with the remaining one; how I missed him at last, and finally discovered him seated on a table in one of the tenantless cabins, with a bottle of syrup between his paws, vainly endeavoring to extract its contents—these and other details of that eventful day I shall not weary the reader with now. Enough, that when Dick Sylvester returned, I was pretty well fagged out, and the baby was rolled up, an immense bolster at the foot of the couch,

asleep.

—BRET HARTE (adapted).

[Footnote: Why had the miners chosen the name “Baby Sylvester” for the bear cub? Read the story and explain the author's surprise at the appearance of the “Baby.” Does the author describe the bear sympathetically and lovingly or as a naturalist? Illustrate. What qualities had the cub that endeared it to the author? Which of the senses predominates in the description? Illustrate. Would you consider “Baby Sylvester” capable of training? Why? Read the entire story and tell what becomes of the “Baby.”]

ADDRESS AT GETTYSBURG

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting−place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us;—that from these honored dead, we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion;—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

[Footnote: Does the style and sentiment expressed remind you of an older literature? Illustrate. Do Lincoln's statements about war apply to the present great European conflict? Illustrate. Point out the effectiveness of repetition. Note the places where the prose becomes almost poetical. Is the appeal in the speeches to reason or to feeling? Do you feel the personality of Lincoln in these speeches? The Gettysburg speech is commonly considered one of the greatest speeches ever made. Can you mention any other famous speeches that are regarded as fine literature?]

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Fellow Countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then, a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One−eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered,—that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes. “Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.” If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan,—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

AN APPRECIATION OF LINCOLN

To these qualifications of high literary excellence, and easy practical mastery of affairs of transcendent importance, we must add as an explanation of his immediate and world−wide fame, his possession of certain moral qualities rarely combined in such high degree in one individual. His heart was so tender that he would dismount from his horse in a forest to replace in their nest young birds which had fallen by the roadside; he could not sleep at night if he knew that a soldier−boy was under sentence of death; he could not, even at the bidding of duty or policy, refuse the prayer of age or helplessness in distress. Children instinctively loved him; they never found his rugged features ugly; his sympathies were quick and seemingly unlimited. He was absolutely without prejudice of class or condition. Frederick Douglass [Footnote: Frederick Douglass: a noted orator and journalist. He was born (a slave) in 1817 and died in 1895.] says he was the only man of distinction he ever met who never reminded him, by word or manner, of his color; he was as just and generous to the rich and well−born as to the poor and humble—a thing rare among politicians. He was tolerant even of evil: though no man can ever have lived with a loftier scorn of meanness and selfishness, he yet recognized their existence and counted with them. He said one day, with a flash of cynical wisdom worthy of a La Rochefoucauld, [Footnote: La Rochefoucauld: Francois La Rochefoucauld was a French writer and moralist of the seventeenth century.] that honest statesmanship was the employment of individual meanness for the public good. He never asked perfection of any one; he did not even insist, for others, upon the high standards he set up for himself. At a time before the word was invented he was the first of opportunists. With the fire of a reformer and a martyr in his heart, he yet proceeded by the ways of cautious and practical statecraft. He always worked with things as they were, while never relinquishing the desire and effort to make them better. To a hope which saw the Delectable Mountains of absolute justice and peace in the future, to a faith that God in his own time would give to all men the things convenient to them, he added a charity which embraced in its deep bosom all the good and the bad, all the virtues and the infirmities of men, and a patience like that of nature, which in its vast and fruitful activity knows neither haste nor rest.

—JOHN HAY.

[Footnote: Do you know any facts of Lincoln's life that would support some of these statements? What has come to be the universally accepted estimate of Lincoln? What qualities of Lincoln seem most to impress the writer? Can you point to anything in Lincoln's addresses that proves the correctness of the popular judgment of him? Point out instances of contrast in this selection. Do you know anything about the “Lincoln Mythology” that has grown up since the war?]

THE ELEPHANTS THAT STRUCK

I remember an occasion, many years ago, when in Ceylon, I, in connection with my brother, had organized a scheme for the development of a mountain sanitarium at Newera Ellia. We had a couple of tame elephants employed in various works; but it was necessary to obtain the assistance of the government stables for the transport of very heavy machinery, which could not be conveyed in the ordinary native carts. There were accordingly a large number of elephant wagons drawn by their colossal teams, some of which required four elephants.

It was the wet season upon the mountains. Our settlement was 6200 feet above the sea, and the zigzag pass from Rambodde, at the base of the steep ascent, was fifteen miles in length. The crest of the pass was 7000 feet in altitude, from which we descended 800 feet to the Newera Ellia plain.

The elephant wagons having arrived at Rambodde from Colombo, about 100 miles distant, commenced the heavy uphill journey. The rain was unceasing, the roads were soft, and the heavily laden wagons sunk deeply in the ruts; but the elephants were mighty beasts, and, laying their weight against the work, they slowly dragged the vehicles up the yielding and narrow way.

The abrupt zigzags bothered the long wagons, and their still longer teams. The bridges over dangerous chasms entailed the necessity of unloading the heavier carts, and caused great delay. Day after day passed away; but although the ascent was slow, the wagons still moved upwards, and the region of everlasting mist (at that season) was reached. Dense forests clothed the mountain sides; the roar of waterfalls resounded in the depths of black ravines; tangled bamboo grass crept upwards from the wet soil into the lower branches of the moss−covered trees, and formed a green curtain impenetrable to sight.

The thermometer fell daily as the altitude increased. The elephants began to sicken; two fine animals died. There was plenty of food, as the bamboo grass was the natural provender, and in the carts was a good supply of paddy; [Footnote: Paddy: unhusked rice.] but the elephants' intelligence was acting against them—they had reasoned, and had become despondent.

For nine or ten days they had been exposed to ceaseless wet and cold, dragging their unmanageable wagons up a road that even in dry weather was insufficient to sustain the weight. The wheels sank deep below the metal foundation, and became hopelessly imbedded. Again and again the wagons had to be emptied of their contents, and extra elephants were taken from the other carts and harnessed to the empty wagons, which were by sheer weight of animals dragged from the deep mire.

Thus the time had passed, and the elephants had evidently reasoned upon the situation, and had concluded that there was no summit to the mountain, and no end to the steep and horrible ascent; it would be, therefore, useless to persevere in unavailing efforts. They determined, under these heart−breaking circumstances, to strike work; ... and they did strike.

One morning a couple of the elephant drivers appeared at my house in Newera Ellia, and described the situation. They declared that it was absolutely impossible to induce the elephants to work; they had given it up as a bad job!

I immediately mounted my horse and rode up to the pass, and descended the road upon the other side, timing the distance with my watch. Rather under two miles from the summit I found the road completely blocked with elephant carts and wagons; the animals were grazing upon bamboo grass in the thick forest; the rain was drizzling, and a thick mist increased the misery of the scene. I ordered four elephants to be harnessed to a cart intended for only one animal. This was quickly effected, and the drivers were soon astride the animals' necks, and prodded them with the persuasive iron hooks. Not an elephant would exert itself to draw. In vain the drivers, with relentless cruelty, drove the iron points deep into the poor brutes' necks and heads, and used every threat of their vocabulary; the only response was a kind of marking time on the part of the elephants, which simply moved their legs mechanically up and down, and swung their trunks to and fro; but none would pull or exert the slightest power, neither did they move forward a single inch.

I never saw such an instance of passive and determined obstinacy; the case was hopeless.

An idea struck me. I ordered the drivers to detach the four elephants from the harness, and to ride them thus

unfettered up the pass, following behind my horse. It appeared to me that if the elephants were heart−broken, and in despair at the apparently interminable mountain pass, it would be advisable to let them know the actual truth, by showing them that they were hardly two miles from the summit, where they would exchange their uphill labor for a descent into Newera Ellia; they should then have an extra feed, with plenty of jaggery (a coarse brown sugar), and be introduced to the companionship of our two female elephants. If they passed an agreeable night, with the best of food and warm quarters, they would possibly return the following day to their work, and with lighter hearts put their shoulders to the wheel, instead of yielding to a dogged attitude of despair.

The success of this ruse was perfect. The elephants accompanied me to Newera Ellia, and were well fed and cared for. On the following day we returned to the heavy work, and I myself witnessed their start with the hitherto unyielding wagon. Not only did they exert their full powers, and drag the lumbering load straight up the fatiguing hill without the slightest hesitation, but their example, or some unaccountable communication between them, appeared to give general encouragement. I employed the most willing elephants as extras to each wagon, which they drew to the summit of the pass, and then returned to assist the others,—thus completing what had been pronounced by the drivers as utterly impossible. There can be no doubt that the elephants had at once perceived the situation, and in consequence recovered their lost courage.

—SAMUEL WHITE BAKER.

[Footnote: What part do you imagine the writer had in the expedition he describes? How would the natives have solved the problem? Have you ever heard other stories of elephants that seem to show the power of reasoning?]

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture [Footnote: Sepulture: burial.] as Roaring−Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprung up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. [Footnote: It was remarkable—Roaring Camp. What does this mean?] Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog,—a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. “Besides,” said Tom Ryder, “them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us.” A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and “Jinny” [Footnote: Jinny: the she−ass that had been procured as a nurse.]—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. “Mind,” said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold−dust into the expressman's hand, “the best that can be got,—lace, you know, and filigree−work and frills, never mind the cost!”

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foot−hills,—that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. “Me and that ass,” he would say, “has been father and mother to him! Don't you,” he would add, apostrophizing [Footnote: Apostrophizing: using a special form of personal address.] the helpless bundle before him, “never go back on us.”

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as “the Kid,” “Stumpy's boy,” “the Coyote” [Footnote: Coyote: also called prairie wolf.] (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of “the little cus.” But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought “the luck” to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. “Luck” was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. “It's better,” said the philosophical Oakhurst, “to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck and start him fair.”

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to “Tommy Luck”—or “The Luck,” as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean, and white−washed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and prepared. The rosewood cradle—packed eighty miles by mule—had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, “sorter killed the rest of the furniture.” So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see “how The Luck got on” seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self−defence, the rival establishment of “Tuttle's grocery” bestirred itself, and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding “The Luck.” It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, [Footnote: Cuticle: outer skin.] which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. [Footnote: Certain prudential reasons. What were they?] Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were normal and social sanitary laws neglected. “Tommy,” who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a

persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as “Curse the luck!” was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, [Footnote: Interdicted: forbidden.] being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillizing quality, and one song, sung by “Man−o'−War Jack,” an English sailor, from her majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of “the Arethusa, Seventy−four,” in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, “On b−o−o−o−ard of the Arethusa.” It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song,—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end,—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. “This 'ere kind o' think,” said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, “is 'evingly.” It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet−smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. [Footnote: Las Mariposas: the Mariposa lilies; also called butterfly lilies.] The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for The Luck. It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that “would do for Tommy.” Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be serenely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his “corral,” [Footnote: Corral: an inclosure for animals.]—a hedge of tessellated [Footnote: Tessellated: checkered.] pine boughs which surrounded his bed,—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. “I crep' up the bank just now,” said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, “and dern my skin if he wasn't a−talking to a jaybird as was a−sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a−jawin' at each other just like two cherrybums.” Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gum; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumblebees buzzed, and the rooks cawed an accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were “flush times,” and the luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly preempted. [Footnote: Pre−empted: claimed by special privilege of purchase.] This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, “They've a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby.”

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of The Luck, who might

perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely skeptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did. The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foot hills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and debris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. “Water put the gold into them gulches,” said Stumpy. “It's been here once and will not be here again!” And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp. In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy, nearest the river−bank, was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, The Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared.

—BRET HARTE (adapted.)

[Footnote: Where is the scene of the story laid? What is the probable time? It was Bret Harte's peculiar power to find tenderness and fineness of feeling among rough men. Where do you see these things in this story? Does the story show “poetic insight”? Cf. Hawthorne's definition. [Footnote: “What is called poetic insight is the gift of discerning, in this sphere of strangely mingled elements, the beauty and majesty that are compelled to assume a garb so sordid.”—House of the Seven Gables, Chap. II.] Why did the miners insist on “frills” for Tommy? Does the change wrought in Roaring Camp seem to you to be reasonable? What was the real “luck” that Tommy brought to Roaring Camp?]

THE STORY OF MUHANNAD DIN

The polo−ball was an old one, scarred, chipped, and dinted. It stood on the mantelpiece among the pipe−stems which Imam Din, khitmatgar, was cleaning for me.

“Does the Heaven−born want this ball?” said Imam Din deferentially.

The Heaven−born set no particular store by it; but of what use was a polo−ball to a khitmatgar?

“By Your Honour's favour, I have a little son. He has seen this ball, and desires it to play with. I do not want it for myself.”

No one would for an instant accuse portly old Imam Din of wanting to play with polo−balls. He carried out the battered thing into the verandah; and there followed a hurricane of joyful squeaks, a patter of small feet, and the thud−thud−thud of the ball rolling along the ground. Evidently the little son had been waiting outside the door to secure his treasure. But how had he managed to see that polo−ball?

Next day, coming back from office half an hour earlier than usual, I was aware of a small figure in the dining−room—a tiny, plump figure in a ridiculously inadequate shirt which came, perhaps, half−way down the tubby stomach. It wandered round the room, thumb in mouth, crooning to itself as it took stock of the pictures. Undoubtedly this was the “little son.”

He had no business in my room, of course; but was so deeply absorbed in his discoveries that he never noticed me in the doorway. I stepped into the room and startled him nearly into a fit. He sat down on the ground with a gasp. His eyes opened, and his mouth followed suit. I knew what was coming, and fled, followed by a long, dry howl which reached the servants' quarters far more quickly than any command of mine had ever done. In ten seconds Imam Din was in the dining−room. Then despairing sobs arose, and I returned to find Imam Din admonishing the small sinner, who was using most of his shirt as a handkerchief.

“This boy,” said Imam Din judicially, “is a budmash [Footnote: Budmash: a disreputable fellow.]—a big budmash. He will, without doubt, go to the jail−khana for his behaviour.” Renewed yells from the penitent, and an elaborate apology to myself from Imam Din.

“Tell the baby,” said I, “that the Sahib [Footnote: Sahib: a respectful title given to Europeans by the natives of India.] is not angry, and take him away.” Imam Din conveyed my forgiveness to the offender, who had now gathered all his shirt round his neck, stringwise, and the yell subsided into a sob. The two set off for the door. “His name,” said Imam Din, “is Muhammad Din, and he is a budmash.” Freed from present danger, Muhammad Din turned round in his father's arms, and said gravely, “it is true that my name is Muhammad Din, Tahib, but I am not a budmash. I am a man!”

From that day dated my acquaintance with Muhammad Din. Never again did he come into my dining−room, but on the neutral ground of the garden, we greeted each other with much state, though our conversation was confined to “Talaam, Tahib” from his side, and “Salaam, Muhammad Din” from mine. Daily on my return from office, the little white shirt and the fat little body used to rise from the shade of the creeper−covered trellis where they had been hid; and daily I checked my horse here, that my salutation might not be slurred over or given unseemly.

Muhammad Din never had any companions. He used to trot about the compound, [Footnote: Compound: an inclosure containing a house and outbuildings.] in and out of the castor−oil bushes, on mysterious errands of his own. One day I stumbled upon some of his handiwork far down the grounds. He had half buried the polo−ball in the dust, and stuck six shrivelled old marigold flowers in a circle round it. Outside that circle again was a rude square, traced out in bits of red brick alternating with fragments of broken china; the whole bounded by a little bank of dust. The water−man from the well−curb put in a plea for the small architect, saying that it was only the play of a baby and did not much disfigure my garden.

Heaven knows that I had no intention of touching the child's work then or later; but, that evening, a stroll through the garden brought me unawares full on it; so that I trampled, before I knew, marigold−heads, dust−bank, and fragments of broken soap−dish into confusion past all hope of mending. Next morning, I came upon Muhammad Din crying softly to himself over the ruin I had wrought. Some one had cruelly told him that the Sahib was very angry with him for spoiling the garden, and had scattered his rubbish, using bad language the

while. Muhammad Din laboured for an hour at effacing every trace of the dust−bank and pottery fragments, and it was with a tearful and apologetic face that he said, “Talaam, Tahib,” when I came home from office. A hasty inquiry resulted in Imam Din informing Muhammad Din that, by my singular favour, he was permitted to disport himself as he pleased. Whereat the child took heart and fell to tracing the ground−plan of an edifice which was to eclipse the marigold−polo−ball creation.

For some months the chubby little eccentricity revolved in his humble orbit among the castor−oil bushes and in the dust; always fashioning magnificent palaces from stale flowers thrown away by the bearer, smooth water−worn pebbles, bits of broken glass, and feathers pulled, I fancy, from my fowls—always alone, and always crooning to himself.

A gaily−spotted sea−shell was dropped one day close to the last of his little buildings; and I looked that Muhammad Din should build something more than ordinarily splendid on the strength of it. Nor was I disappointed. He meditated for the better part of an hour, and his crooning rose to a jubilant song. Then he began tracing in the dust. It would certainly be a wondrous palace, this one, for it was two yards long and a yard broad in ground−plan. But the palace was never completed.

Next day there was no Muhammad Din at the head of the carriage−drive, and no “Talaam, Tahib” to welcome my return. I had grown accustomed to the greeting, and its omission troubled me. Next day Imam Din told me that the child was suffering slightly from fever and needed quinine. He got the medicine, and an English Doctor.

“They have no stamina, these brats,” said the Doctor, as he left Imam Din's quarters.

A week later, though I would have given much to have avoided it, I met on the road to the Mussulman burying−ground Imam Din, accompanied by one friend, carrying in his arms, wrapped in a white cloth, all that was left of little Muhammad Din.

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

[Footnote: Point out the characteristics of Muhammad Din that are common to all childhood, and those that are more especially Oriental. Why do you think Muhammad Din always played alone? Note the simple direct way of telling the story. What other stories have been told in this way? Would you have been able to recognize Muhammad Din from the author's description? Would the destruction of the sand−house be a tragedy to most Western children? Why was it to Muhammad Din? Notice the simple pathos of the ending. Is it made more poignant by being unexpected?]

A CHILD

In Kensington Gardens, [Footnote: Kensington Gardens: in southwest London.] that February day, it was very still. Trees, stripped of every leaf, raised their bare clean twigs towards a sky so grey and so unstirring that there might never have been wind or sun. And on those branches pigeons sat, silent, as though they understood that there was no new life as yet; they seemed waiting, loth to spread their wings lest they should miss the coming of the Spring.

Down in the grass the tiniest green flames were burning, a sign of the fire flowers that would leap up if the sun would feed them.

And on a seat there sat a child.

He sat between his father and his mother, looking straight before him. It was plain that the reason why he looked so straight before him was that he really had not strength to care to look to right or left—so white his face was, so puny were his limbs. His clothes had evidently been designed for others, and this was fortunate, for they prevented the actual size of him from being seen. He was not, however, what is called neglected; his face was clean, and the utmost of protection that Fate and the condition of his parents had vouchsafed was evidently lavished on him, for round his neck there was a little bit of draggled fur which should have been round the neck of her against whose thin shabby side he leaned. This mother of his was looking at the ground; and from the expression of her face she seemed to think that looking at the ground was all life had to offer.

The father sat with his eyes shut. He had shabby clothes, a grey face, and a grey collar that had once been white. Above the collar his thin cheeks had evidently just been shaved—for it was Saturday, and by the colour of those cheeks, and by his boots, whose soles, hardly thicker than a paper sheet, still intervened between him and the ground, he was seen not to be a tramp or outdoor person, but an indoor worker of some sort, and very likely out of work, who had come out to rest in the company of his wife and family. His eyes being shut, he sat without the pain of looking at a single thing, moving his jaw at intervals from side to side.

And between the man and the woman, the child sat, very still, evidently on good terms with them, not realising that they had brought him out of a warm darkness where he had been happy, out of a sweet nothingness, into which, and soon perhaps, he would pass again—not realising that they had so neglected to keep pace with things, or that things had so omitted to keep pace with them, that he himself had eaten in his time about one half the food he should have eaten, and that of the wrong sort. By the expression of his face, that pale small ghost had evidently grasped the truth that things were as they had to be. He seemed to sit there reviewing his own life, and taking for granted that it must be what it was, from hour to hour, and day to day, and year to year.

And before me, too, the incidents of his small journey passed. I saw him in the morning getting off the family bed, where it was sometimes warm, and chewing at a crust of bread before he set off to school in company with other children, some of whom were stouter than himself; saw him carrying in his small fist the remnants of his feast, and dropping it, or swopping it away for peppermints, because it tired him to consume it, having no juices to speak of in his little stomach. I seemed to understand that, accustomed as he was to eating little, he almost always wanted to eat less, not because he had any wish to die—nothing so extravagant—but simply that he nearly always felt a little sick; I felt that his pale, despondent mother was always urging him to eat, when there were things to eat, and that this bored him, since they did not strike him as worth all that trouble with his jaws. She must have found it difficult indeed to persuade him that there was any point at all in eating; for, from his looks, he could manifestly not now enjoy anything but peppermints and kippered herrings. I seemed to see him in his school, not learning, not wanting to learn anything, nor knowing why this should be so, ignorant of the dispensations of a Providence who—after hesitating long to educate him lest this should make his parents paupers—now compelled his education, having first destroyed his stomach that he might be incapable of taking in what he was taught. That small white creature could not as yet have grasped the notion that the welfare of the future lay, not with the future, but with the past. He only knew that every day he went to school with little in his stomach, and every day came back from school with less.

All this he seemed to be reviewing as he sat there, but not in thought; his knowledge was too deep for words; he was simply feeling, as a child that looked as he looked would naturally be feeling, on that bench between his

parents. He opened his little mouth at times, as a small bird will open its small beak, without apparent purpose; and his lips seemed murmuring:

"My stomach feels as if there were a mouse inside it; my legs are aching; it's all quite natural, no doubt!"

To reconcile this apathy of his with recollections of his unresting, mirthless energy down alleys and on doorsteps, it was needful to remember human nature, and its exhaustless cruse [Footnote: Exhaustless cruse. See I Kings XVII: 8−16.] of courage. For, though he might not care to live, yet, while he was alive he would keep his end up, because he must—there was no other way. And why exhaust himself in vain regrets and dreams of things he could not see, and hopes of being what he could not be! That he had no resentment against anything was certain from his patient eyes—not even against those two who sat, one on either side of him—unaware that he was what he was, in order that they who against his will had brought him into being, might be forced by law to keep a self−respect they had already lost, and have the insufficiency of things he could not eat. For he had as yet no knowledge of political economy. He evidently did not view his case in any petty, or in any party, spirit; he did not seem to look on himself as just a half−starved child that should have cried its eyes out till it was fed at least as well as the dogs that passed him; he seemed to look on himself as that impersonal, imperial thing—the Future of the Race.

So profound his apathy!

And, as I looked, the "Future of the Race" turned to his father:

"'Ark at the bird!" he said.

It was a pigeon, who high upon a tree had suddenly begun to croon. One could see his head outlined against the grey unstirring sky, first bending back, then down into his breast, then back again; and that soft song of his filled all the air, like an invocation of fertility.

"The Future of the Race" watched him for a minute without moving, and suddenly he laughed. That laugh was a little hard noise like the clapping of two boards—there was not a single drop of blood in it, nor the faintest sound of music; so might a marionette [Footnote: Marionette: a puppet moved by strings.] have laughed—a figure made of wood and wire.

And in that laugh I seemed to hear innumerable laughter, the laughter in a million homes of the myriad unfed.

So laughed the Future of the richest and the freest and the proudest race that has ever lived on earth, that February afternoon, with the little green flames lighted in the grass, under a sky that knew not wind or sun—so he laughed at the pigeon that was calling for the Spring.

—JOHN GALSWORTHY.

[Footnote: Why could the child enjoy only "peppermints and kippered herring"? Why does the author call the child the "Future of the Race"? Is the term used seriously or ironically? What plea does the author make for all childhood? Does the portrait of the child seem real or exaggerated? Does the author place the blame for such conditions as made this child an unhappy weakling? Compare this portrait with that of Muhammad Din.]

TOO DEAR FOR THE WHISTLE

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and being charmed with the sound of a whistle, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind of what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

This, however, was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, “Don't give too much for the whistle”; and I saved my money. As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, “who gave too much for the whistle.” When I saw one too ambitious of court favor, sacrificing his time in attendance on levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends, to attain it, I have said to myself—

“This man gives too much for his whistle.” When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, “He pays, indeed,” said I, “too dear for his whistle.”

If I knew a miser, who gave up every kind of comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow−citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship, for the sake of accumulating wealth—“Poor man,” said I, “you pay too dear for your whistle.” When I met a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind, or of his fortune, to mere corporeal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit—“Mistaken man,” said I, “you are providing pain for yourself, instead of pleasure; you are paying too dear for your whistle.” If I see one fond of appearance or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, “Alas,” say I, “he has paid dear, very dear for his whistle.” In short, I conceive that a great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimate they have made of the value of things, and by their giving “too much for their whistles.”

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

[Footnote: This extract was taken from a letter which Franklin wrote from Passy in 1779 to Madame Brillon.

The phrase, “paying too dear for his whistle,” has become proverbial. What does it mean? What famous book of maxims was written by Franklin? Can you quote any of the sayings in it? Do you know anything of Franklin's life that showed whether he lived up to the moral he sets forth in this story?]

A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

He (Villon) [Footnote: Francois Villon: born 1431, died 1484. Stevenson characterizes him as “poet, student, and housebreaker.”] went boldly to the door and knocked with an assured hand. On both previous occasions, he had knocked timidly and with some dread of attracting notice; but now when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry, knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding. The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin, phantasmal [Footnote: Phantasmal: ghostly.] reverberations, as though it were quite empty; but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near, a couple of bolts were withdrawn, and one wing was opened broadly, as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within. A tall figure of a man, muscular and spare, but a little bent, confronted Villon. The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured; the nose blunt at the bottom, but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows; the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings, and the whole face based upon a thick white beard, boldly and squarely trimmed. Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand−lamp, it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do; but it was a fine face, honourable rather than intelligent, strong, simple, and righteous.

“You knock late, sir,” said the old man in resonant, courteous tones.

Villon cringed, and brought up many servile words of apology; at a crisis of this sort, the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion.

“You are cold,” repeated the old man, “and hungry? Well, step in.” And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture.

“Some great seigneur,” [Footnote: Seigneur: lord.] thought Villon, as his host, setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry, shot the bolts once more into their places.

“You will pardon me if I go in front,” he said, when this was done; and he preceded the poet upstairs into a large apartment, warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture: only some gold plate on a sideboard; some folios; [Footnote: Folios: large books.] and a stand of armor between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls, representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece, and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

“Will you seat yourself,” said the old man, “and forgive me if I leave you? I am alone in my house to−night, and if you are to eat I must forage for myself.”

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself, and began examining the room, with the stealth and passion of a cat. [Footnote: With the stealth and passion of a cat. Does this give you any clue to Villon's character?] He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios, and investigated the arms upon the shield, and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window curtains, and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass in figures, so far as he could see, of martial [Footnote: Martial: warlike.] import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath, and retaining it with puffed cheeks, looked round and round him, turning on his heels, as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

“Seven pieces of plate,” he said. “If there had been ten, I would have risked it. A fine house, and a line old master, so help me all the saints!”

And just then, hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor, he stole back to his chair and began humbly toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.

His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He set down the plate upon the table, motioning Villon to draw in his chair and going to the sideboard, brought back two goblets, which he filled.

“I drink your better fortune,” he said, gravely touching Villon's cup with his own.

“To our better acquaintance,” said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur, but Villon was hardened in that matter; he had made mirth for great lords before now, and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands [Footnote: Viands: food.] with a ravenous gusto, while the old man, leaning backward, watched him with steady, curious

eyes.

"Have you any money?" asked the old man.

"I have one white," [Footnote: White: a small coin.] returned the poet laughing. "I got it out of a dead jade's stocking in a porch. She was as dead as Caesar, poor wench, and as cold as a church, with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair. This is a hard world in winter for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me."

"I," said the old man, "am Enguerrand de la Feuillee, seigneur de Brisetout, bailly du Patatrac. [Footnote: Bailly: bailiff.] Who and what may you be?"

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence. "I am called Francis Villon," he said, "a poor Master of Arts of this university. I know some Latin, and a deal of vice. I can make chansons, ballades, lais, virelais, and roundels, [Footnote: Lais: ... virilais. Chansons ... roundels: different types of versification.] and I am very fond of wine. I was born in a garret, and I shall not improbably die upon the gallows. I may add, my lord, that from this night forward I am your lordship's very obsequious, servant to command."

"No servant of mine," said the knight, "my guest for this evening, and no more."

"A very grateful guest;" said Villon politely, and he drank in dumb show to his entertainer.

"You are shrewd," began the old man, tapping his forehead, "very shrewd; you have learning; you are a clerk; [Footnote: Clerk: the term formerly applied to a man of letters.] and yet you take a small piece of money off a dead woman in the street. Is it not a kind of theft?"

"It is a kind of theft much practiced in the wars, my lord."

"The wars are the field of honor," returned the old man proudly. "There a man plays his life upon the cast; he fights in the name of his lord the king, his Lord God, and all their lordships the holy saints and angels."

"Put it," said Villon, "that I were really a thief, should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?"

"For gain but not for honor."

"Gain?" repeated Villon with a shrug. "Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions [Footnote: Requisitions: demands, generally of money and supplies, made by invaders upon the people of the invaded country.] we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to the others. The men−at−arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many ploughmen swinging on trees about the country; ay, I have seen thirty on one elm, and a very poor figure they made; and when I asked someone how all these came to be hanged, I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men−at−arms."

"These things are a necessity of war, which the lowborn must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive overhard; there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity; and indeed many follow arms who are no better than brigands."

"You see," said the poet, "you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand; and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect [Footnote: Circumspect: wary.] manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep; the farmer grumbles a bit, but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep, and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet; I am only Tom, Dick or Harry; I am a rogue and a dog, and hanging's too good for me— with all my heart; but just ask the farmer which of us he prefers, just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights."

"Look at us two," said his lordship. "I am old, strong and honored. If I were turned from my house tomorrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless, and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside! I fear no man and nothing; I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house, or, if it please the king to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows; a rough, swift death, without hope or honor. Is there no difference between these two?"

"As far as to the moon" Villon acquiesced. "But if I had been born lord of Brisetout, and you had been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any the less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan, and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier, and you the thief?"

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (adapted).

[Footnote: What hints does the sketch give you of the period in which the story is laid? What characteristics of Villon are brought out? Is there any suggestion of the poet in his remarks? What is the real difference between the two men? Does Villon make out a good case? Is his description of war a fair one? Why did Villon not steal the goblets?]

A BAD FIVE MINUTES IN THE ALPS

It was time to return, and the demon who amuses himself by beguiling Alpine travellers suggested the memory of a certain short cut which involved a bit of amusing scrambling. I was speedily occupied in fighting my way downwards through a steep ravine, cloven by a vicious little torrent from a lofty glacier, when—how it happened I know not, for all forms of earth and grassy slope were obliterated at a few yards by the descending showers—I suddenly found that I had left the right track and was descending too sharply towards the stream. At the same time I saw, or thought I saw, that by crossing the face of the cliff for a few yards I should regain the ordinary route. The first step or two was easy; then came a long stride, in which I had to throw out one hand by way of grappling−iron to a jutting rock above. The rock was reeking with moisture, and as I threw my weight upon it my hand slipped, and before I had time to look round I was slithering downwards without a single point of support. Below me as I well knew, at a depth of some two hundred feet, was the torrent. One plunge through the air upon its rugged stones and I should be a heap of mangled flesh and bones. Instinctively I flung abroad arms and legs in search of strong supports; in another moment I was brought up with a jerk. My hands now rested on the narrow ledge where my feet had been a moment before, and one foot was propped by some insecure support whose nature I could not precisely determine.

Desperately choking back the surging emotions that seemed to shake my limbs I sought for some means of escape. By slowly moving my left hand I managed to grasp a stem of rhododendron which grew upon the ledge of rock, and felt tolerably firm; next I tried to feel for some support with the toe of my left boot; the rock, however, against which it rested was not only hard, but exquisitely polished by the ancient glacier which had forced its way down the gorge. A geologist would have been delighted with this admirable specimen of the planing powers of nature; I felt, I must confess, rather inclined to curse geology and glaciers. Not a projecting edge, corner, or cranny could I discover; I might as well have been hanging against a pane of glass. With my right foot, however, I succeeded in obtaining a more satisfactory lodgment; had it not been for this help I could have supported myself so long as my arms would hold out, and I have read somewhere that the strongest man cannot hold on by his arms alone for more than five minutes. I am, unluckily, very weak in the arms, and was therefore quite unable to perform the gymnastic feat of raising myself till I could place a knee upon the ledge where my hands were straining. Here, then, I was, in an apparently hopeless predicament. I might cling to the rocks like a bat in a cave till exhaustion compelled me to let go; on a very liberal allowance, that might last for some twenty minutes, or, say half an hour. There was, of course, a remote chance that some traveler or tourist might pass through the glen; but the ordinary path lay some hundred yards above my head, on the other side of the rock−pinnacle, and a hundred yards was, for all practical purposes, the same thing as a hundred miles; the ceaseless roar of the swollen torrent would drown my voice as effectually as a battery of artillery; but, for a moment or two, I considered the propriety of shouting for help. The problem was, whether I should diminish my strength more by the effort of shouting than the additional chance of attracting attention was worth.

A puff of wind had driven aside the wreaths of mist; and high above me I could see towering into the gloomy skies a pinnacle of black rock. Sharp and needle−like it sprang from its cloud−hidden base, and scarcely a flake of snow clung to its terrible precipices. Only a day or two before I had been lounging in the inn garden during a delusive sunset gleam of bright weather, and admiring its noble proportions. I had been discussing with my friends the best mode of assaulting its hitherto untrodden summit, on which we had facetiously conferred the name of Teufelshorn. Lighted up by the Alpine glow, it seemed to beckon us upward, and had fired all my mountaineering zeal. Now, though it was not a time for freaks of fancy, it looked like a grim fiend calmly frowning upon my agony. I hated it, and yet had an unpleasant sense that my hatred could do it no harm. If I could have lightened and thundered, its rocks would have come down with a crash; but it stood immovable, scornful, and eternal. There is a poetry in the great mountains, but the poetry may be stern as well as benevolent. If, to the weary Londoner, they speak of fresh air and healthful exercise and exciting adventure, they can look tyrannous and forbidding enough to the peasant on whose fields they void their rheum—as Shakespeare pleasantly puts it—or to the luckless wretch who is clinging in useless supplication at their feet. Grim and fierce, like some primeval giant, that peak looked to me, and for a time the whole doctrine preached by the modern worshippers of

sublime scenery seemed inexpressibly absurd and out of place.

It was becoming tempting to throw up the cards and have done with it. Even the short sharp pang of the crash on the rocks below seemed preferable to draining the last dregs of misery. I gathered myself up, crouching as low as I dared, and then springing from the right foot, and aiding the spring with my left hand, I threw out my right at the little jutting point. The tips of my fingers just reached their aim, but only touched without anchoring themselves. As I fell back, my foot missed its former support, and my whole weight came heavily on the feeble left hand. The clutch was instantaneously torn apart, and I was falling through the air. All was over! The mountains sprang upwards with a bound. But before the fall had well begun, before the air had begun to whistle past me, my movement was arrested. With a shock of surprise I found myself lying on a broad bed of deep moss, as comfortably as in my bed at home.

—LESLIE STEPHEN (adapted).

[Footnote: What do you imagine has preceded this selection? What things are contrasted in the account? Do you think that philosophizing helped or hindered the climber? Do you know anything about the difficulties of Alpine climbing from other accounts you have read? Compare the style of this selection with “The Luck of Roaring Camp” and “A Leaf in the Storm.”]

THE GOLD TRAIL

We came upon the diggings quite suddenly. The trail ran around the corner of a hill; and there they were below us! In the wide, dry stream bottom perhaps fifty men were working busily, like a lot of ants. Some were picking away at the surface of the ground, others had dug themselves down waist deep, and stooped and rose like legless bodies. Others had disappeared below ground, and showed occasionally only as shovel blades. From so far above, the scene was very lively and animated, for each was working like a beaver, and the red shirts made gay little spots of colour. On the hillside clung a few white tents and log cabins; but the main town itself, we later discovered, as well as the larger diggings, lay around the bend and upstream.

We looked all around us for some path leading down to the river, but could find none; so perforce we had to continue on along the trail. Thus we entered the camp of Hangman's Gulch for if it had been otherwise, I am sure we would have located promptly where we had seen those red−shirted men.

The camp consisted merely of a closer−knit group of tents, log shacks, and a few larger buildings constructed of a queer combination of heavy hewn timbers and canvas. We saw nobody at all, though in some of the larger buildings we heard signs of life. However, we did not wait to investigate the wonders of Hangman's Gulch, but drove our animals along the one street, looking for the trail that should lead us back to the diggings. We missed it, somehow, but struck into a beaten path that took us upstream. This we followed a few hundred yards. It proceeded along a rough, boulder−strewn river−bed, around a point of rough, jagged rocks, and out to a very wide gravelly flat through which the river had made itself a narrow channel. The flat swarmed with men, all of them busy, and very silent.

Leading our pack−horses we approached the nearest pair of these men, and stood watching them curiously. One held a coarse screen of willow which he shook continuously above a common cooking−pot, while the other slowly shovelled earth over this sieve. When the two pots, which with the shovel seemed to be all the tools these men possessed, had been half filled thus with the fine earth, the men carried them to the river. We followed. The miners carefully submerged the pots, and commenced to stir their contents with their fists. The light earth muddied the water, floated upward, and then flowed slowly over the rim of the pots and down the current. After a few minutes of this, they lifted the pots carefully, drained off the water, and started back.

“May we look?” ventured Johnny.

The taller man glanced at us, and our pack−horses, and nodded. This was the first time he had troubled to take a good look at us. The bottom of the pot was covered with fine black sand in which we caught the gleam and sparkle of something yellow.

“Is that gold?” I asked, awed.

“That's gold,” the man repeated, his rather saturnine features lighting up with a grin. Then seeing our interest, he unbent a trifle. “We dry the sand, and then blow it away,” he explained; and strode back to where his companion was impatiently waiting.

We stumbled on over the rocks and debris. There were probably something near a hundred men at work in the gulch. We soon observed that the pot method was considered a very crude and simple way of getting out the gold. Most of the men carried iron pans full of the earth to the waterside, where, after submerging until the lighter earth had floated off, they slopped the remainder over the side with a peculiar twisting, whirling motion, leaving at last only the black sand—and the gold! These pan miners were in the great majority. But one group of four men was doing business on a larger scale. They had constructed what looked like a very shallow baby−cradle on rockers into which they poured their earth and water. By rocking the cradle violently but steadily, they spilled the mud over the sides. Cleats had been nailed in the bottom to catch the black sand.

We wandered about here and there, looking with all our eyes. The miners were very busy and silent, but quite friendly, and allowed us to examine as much as we pleased the results of their operations. In the pots and cradles the yellow flake gold glittered plainly, contrasting with the black sand. In the pans, however, the residue spread out fan−shaped along the angle between the bottom and the side, and at the apex the gold lay heavy and beautiful all by itself. The men were generally bearded, tanned with working in this blinding sun, and plastered liberally with the red earth. We saw some queer sights, however; as when we came across a jolly pair dressed in what were

the remains of ultra−fashionable garments up to and including plug hats! At one side working some distance from the stream were small groups of native Californians or Mexicans. They did not trouble to carry the earth all the way to the river; but, after screening it roughly, tossed it into the air above a canvas, thus winnowing out the heavier pay dirt. [Footnote: Pay dirt: dirt that has gold enough in it to pay for working it.] I thought this must be very disagreeable.

As we wandered about here and there among all these men so busily engaged, and with our own eyes saw pan after pan show gold, actual metallic guaranteed gold, such as rings and watches and money are made of, a growing excitement possessed us, the excitement of a small boy with a new and untried gun. We wanted to get at it ourselves. Only we did not know how.

Finally Yank approached one of the busy miners.

“Stranger,” said he, “we're new to this. Maybe you can tell us where we can dig a little of this gold ourselves.”

The man straightened his back, to exhibit a roving humorous blue eye, with which he examined Yank from top to toe.

“If,” said he, “it wasn't for that eighteen−foot cannon you carry over your left arm, and a cold gray pair of eyes you carry in your head, I'd direct you up the sidehill yonder, and watch you sweat. As it is, you can work anywhere anybody else isn't working. Start in!”

“Can we dig next to you, then?” asked Yank, nodding at an unbroken piece of ground just upstream.

The miner clambered carefully out of his waist−deep trench, searched his pockets, produced a pipe and tobacco. After lighting this he made Yank a low bow.

“Thanks for the compliment; but I warn you, this claim of mine is not very rich. I'm thinking of trying somewhere else.”

“Don't you get any gold?”

“Oh, a few ounces a day.”

“That suits me for a beginning,” said Yank decidedly. “Come on boys!”

The miner hopped back into his hole, only to stick his head out again for the purpose of telling us:

“Mind you keep fifteen feet away!”

With eager hands we slipped a pick and shovels from beneath the pack ropes, undid our iron bucket, and without further delay commenced feverishly to dig.

—STEWART EDWARD WHITE.

[Footnote: Where do you imagine this scene is laid? Why was the miner willing to admit the newcomers? What success do you think they had? Note the simplicity of the style and the diction. Can you tell anything about the first rush of gold seekers to California? Read the novel, “Gold,” from which this selection is taken. You will find it very interesting.]

TWENTY YEARS OF ARCTIC STRUGGLE

On the 28th of February the various parties took their departure from Cape Hecla, and following in the rear, Peary hurried on with all possible speed, hopeful of reaching the Pole at last.

For some days the ice was in motion everywhere; but it gradually became quieter, and as there was very little wind the travelling was particularly good. Full of impatience as he tramped along, and grudging every moment given to rest, Peary dreaded lest he should meet with some obstacle, such as open water or impassable ice, that would put an end to the journey northwards.

Delayed by gales and open water, and driven out of his course seventy miles to the eastward, Peary was cut off from communication with his supporting parties; and finding that he could no longer depend upon them, he determined to make a dash for the Pole with the party, eight in all, and the supplies which he had with him.

Abandoning everything not absolutely essential and bending every energy to set a record pace, they travelled thirty miles in a ten hours' march. Storms of wind and snow added considerably to the difficulties of the journey, the strain of which told severely on both men and dogs.

The 20th of April brought the weary travellers into a region of open leads, [Footnote: Open leads: open ways in an ice−field.] bearing north and south. Resting here for a few hours, Peary and his companions resumed their march at midnight, pushing on with feverish haste to lessen the distance between them and the goal that was luring them on. Travelling as fast as they could till noon of the 21st, they then came to a final halt.

Disappointed at once more having to stop before the object of all his striving had been reached, Peary would have liked to make the last dash with only one or two of his men; but he dared not do this in view of the condition of the ice, and reluctantly he had to confess that once again the prize had eluded his grasp. Making observations, he found that they were in 87 deg, 6' north latitude, the most northerly point that had yet been reached by man.

Warned by the haggard faces of his comrades and the skeleton figures of the few remaining dogs, Peary saw that no time must be lost in turning back. After hoisting a flag from the summit of the highest pinnacle, and leaving a bottle containing a record of the journey, the exhausted men turned their backs on the Pole, and began the weary march homeward.

Trying as the outward march had been, the dangers of the return journey were even greater. Besides, there was no longer the excitement of possible victory to encourage the men in the face of hardships. Killing their dogs for food, and breaking up the sledges to provide fires for cooking, the tired and dispirited explorers pushed on till they found themselves stranded on an island of ice. Was this, then, to be the end of the enterprise, and were they to meet death in that cold and pitiless sea? Such a fate seemed inevitable. But just as they were preparing for the worst, two of the Eskimo scouts came hurrying back to the camp with the report that, a few miles farther on, the water was covered with a film of young ice, and that there was a possibility of their being able to cross on snow−shoes.

It was a desperate chance, but they were prepared to take it; and carefully fixing on their snow−shoes, they made the venture, the lightest and most experienced Eskimo taking the lead, with the few remaining dogs attached to the long sledge following, “and the rest of the party abreast, in widely extended skirmish line, some distance behind the sledge.” They crossed in silence, the ice swaying beneath them as they skimmed along. What the result would be none could tell; but they all felt the greatness of their peril.

Peary himself confesses that this was the first and only time in all his Arctic experience that he felt doubtful as to what would happen. “When near the middle of the lead,” he says, “the toe of one of my snow−shoes, as I slid forward, broke through twice in succession; then I thought to myself, 'This is the finish.' A little later there was a cry from some one in the line, but I dared not take my eyes from the steady gliding of my snow−shoes. When we stepped upon the firm ice on the southern side of the lead, sighs of relief from the two men nearest me were distinctly audible. The cry I had heard had been from one of my men, whose toe, like mine, had broken through the ice.” The crossing had been made just in time, for, as the travellers looked round for a moment before turning their faces southward, they saw that the sheet of ice on which they had crossed was in two pieces. “The lead was widening again.”

All were safely across; but they were not yet out of danger. Unable to find a route which they might traverse

with any degree of safety, Peary and his men ascended a high mass of ice to have a better view of their surroundings, and to look for a way of escape. What they beheld from their elevated position might well have struck terror into the boldest heart. Before them extended “such a mass of shattered ice” as Peary had never seen before and hoped never to see again, “a confused mass of fragments, some only the size of paving−stones, others as large as the dome of the Capitol at Washington, but all rounded by the terrific grinding they had received.”

Once again death was looking them in the face, for it seemed an utter impossibility to find a path through that frozen wilderness. But as long as they could keep a footing they determined to struggle on; and stumbling forward at every step, bruised and sore, they at last struck a better road. They made their way to Britannia Island, [Footnote: Britannia Island: one of the most northern islands of the Arctic Ocean.] and thence to Cape May and Cape Bryant.

The brave party suffered much from want of food. For days on end they were on the verge of starvation. A hare that was shot gave them the first full meal for nearly forty days. With snow falling around them, and without tent or covering of any kind, they lay down on the ground to sleep.

Waking in the morning as tired and hungry as ever, they found the tracks of musk−oxen [Footnote: Musk−oxen: the musk−ox has long shaggy hair and somewhat resembles a buffalo.] in the snow, and their hopes rose as they endeavoured to follow the trail. Sweeping the valley with their field−glass, they could see no sign of a living thing; but later on they espied several black dots at a distance, and knew that they had located the herd. Pushing on towards them, Peary and a companion lay down behind a big boulder to rest and gather strength, for they dared not risk a shot before they were sure of their aim. Resolving at last on an attack, the two men grasped their rifles, and, rushing out from behind their place of shelter, made straight for the animals, now less than two hundred yards away. An old bull that was standing guard gave the signal to charge, and in a minute the “black avalanche of thundering beasts” was bearing down on their enemies.

Fortunately for Peary his shot went true, and the great bull fell dead. The maddened rush was stopped; and before the oxen could make their retreat over the ridges six of their number lay dead upon the frozen ground; and for the next few days the party revelled in the delights of a continuous feast.

Reaching the Roosevelt [Footnote: Roosevelt: Peary's ship.] at the end of July, the expedition returned to America a few months later. After twenty years of heroic striving, Peary had again missed the prize; but the victory was postponed only for a little while.

—J. KENNEDY McLEAN.

[Footnote: How does the heroism shown in this account of Peary's struggle compare with military courage? What qualities of the true explorer does Peary show? What picture do you get of the country in which the travelers journeyed? What do you know of Peary's later expedition? Do you think the descriptions would be so purely objective if they were written by the explorer himself? Would the account seem more real or more interesting if it had been told in the first person?]

HENRY WARD BEECHER'S ACCOUNT OF HIS SPEECH IN MANCHESTER

I went to my hotel, and when the day came on which I was to make my first speech, I struck out the notes of my speech in the morning; and then came up a kind of horror—"I don't know whether I can do anything with an English audience—I have never had any experience with an English audience. My American ways, which are all well enough with Americans, may utterly fail here, and a failure in the cause of my country now and here is horrible beyond conception to me!" I think I never went through such a struggle of darkness and suffering in all my life as I did that afternoon. It was about the going down of the sun that God brought me to that state in which I said, "Thy will be done. I am willing to be annihilated; I am willing to fail if the Lord wants me to." I gave it all up into the hands of God, and rose up in a state of peace and serenity simply unspeakable, and when the coach came to take me down to Manchester Hall I felt no disturbance nor dreamed of anything but success.

We reached the hall. The crowd was already beginning to be tumultuous, and I recollect thinking to myself as I stood there looking at them, "I will control you! I came here for victory, and I will have it, by the help of God!" Well, I was introduced, and I must confess that the things that I had done and suffered in my own country, according to what the chairman who introduced me said, amazed me. The speaker was very English on the subject, and I learned that I belonged to an heroic band, and all that sort of thing, with Abolitionism [Footnote: Abolitionism: The policy of those who worked for the abolition of slavery before the Civil War.] mixed in, and so on. By the way, I think it was there that I was introduced as the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher Stowe. But as soon as I began to speak the great audience began to show its teeth, and I had not gone on fifteen minutes before an unparalleled scene of confusion and interruption occurred. No American that has not seen an English mob can form any conception of one. I have seen all sorts of camp meetings and experienced all kinds of public speaking on the stump; I have seen the most disturbed meetings in New York City, and they were all of them as twilight to midnight compared with an English hostile audience. For in England the meeting does not belong to the parties that call it, but to whoever chooses to go; and if they can take it out of your hands, it is considered fair play. This meeting had a very large multitude of men in it who came there for the purpose of destroying the meeting and carrying it the other way when it came to a vote.

I took the measure of the audience and said to myself, "About one fourth of this audience are opposed to me, and about one fourth will be rather in sympathy; and my business now is, not to appeal to that portion that is opposed to me nor to those that are already on my side, but to bring over the middle section." How to do this was a problem. The question was, who could hold out longest. There were five or six storm−centres, boiling and whirling at the same time: here some one pounding on a group with his umbrella and shouting, "Sit down there;" over yonder a row between two or three combatants; somewhere else a group all yelling together at the top of their voices. It was like talking to a storm at sea. But there were the newspaper reporters just in front, and I said to them, "Now, gentlemen, be kind enough to take down what I say. It will be in sections, but I will have it connected by and by." I threw my notes away, and entered on a discussion of the value of freedom as opposed to slavery in the manufacturing interest, arguing that freedom everywhere increases a man's necessities, and what he needs he buys, and that it was, therefore, to the interest of the manufacturing community to stand by the side of labor through the country. I never was more self−possessed and never in more perfect good temper, and I never was more determined that my hearers should feel the curb before I got through with them. The uproar would come in on this side and on that, and they would put insulting questions and make all sorts of calls to me, and I would wait until the noise had subsided, and then get in about five minutes of talk. The reporters would get that down, and then up would come another noise. Occasionally I would see things that amused me and would laugh outright, and the crowd would stop to see what I was laughing at. Then I would sail in again with a sentence or two. A good many times the crowd threw up questions which I caught at and answered back. I may as well put in here one thing that amused me hugely. There were baize doors that opened both ways into side alleys, and there was a huge, burly Englishman standing right in front of one of those doors and roaring like a bull of Bashan; [Footnote: Bull of Bashan: *Psalm* XXII, 12−13] one of the policemen swung his elbow around and hit him in the belly and knocked him through the doorway, so that the last part of the bawl was outside in the alleyway; it struck me so ludicrously to think how the fellow must have looked when he found himself "hollering" outside that I

could not refrain from laughing outright. The audience immediately stopped its uproars, wondering what I was laughing at, and that gave me another chance, and I caught it. So we kept on for about an hour and a half before they got so far calmed down that I could go on peaceably with my speech. They liked the pluck. Englishmen like a man that can stand on his feet and give and take; and so for the last hour I had pretty clear sailing. The next morning every great paper in England had the whole speech. I think it was the design of the men there to break me down on that first speech, by fair means or foul, feeling that if they could do that it would be trumpeted all over the land. I said to them then and there, “Gentlemen, you may break me down now, but I have registered a vow that I will never return home until I have been heard in every county and principal town in the Kingdom of Great Britain. I am not going to be broken down nor put down. I am going to be heard, and my country shall be vindicated.” Nobody knows better than I did what it is to feel that every interest that touches the heart of a Christian man and a patriotic man and a lover of liberty is being assailed wantonly, to stand between one nation and your own, and to feel that you are in a situation in which your country rises or falls with you. And God was behind it all; I felt it and knew it; and when I got through and the vote was called off, you would have thought it was a tropical thunderstorm that swept through that hall as the ayes were thundered, while the noes were an insignificant and contemptible minority. It had all gone on our side, and such enthusiasm I never saw. I think it was there that when I started to go down into the rooms below to get an exit, a big burly Englishman in the gallery wanted to shake hands with me, and I could not reach him, and he called out, “Shake my umbrella!” and he reached it over; I shook it, and as I did so he shouted, “By Jock! Nobody shall touch that umbrella again!”

—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

[Footnote: Henry Ward Beecher was born in 1813 and died in 1887. He was a noted lecturer, reformer, author, and clergyman. He was also among the most prominent of anti−slavery orators, and delivered many addresses in England on subjects relating to the Civil War.

Why do you suppose Mr. Beecher was introduced as Henry Ward Beecher Stowe? Name some characteristics of Mr. Beecher as revealed in this selection. What qualities would you attribute to an English audience, judging from this account? Do you know anything about the custom of “heckling” in England? How much was the success of the speech due to Mr. Beecher's sense of humor? Do you imagine that Mr. Beecher was successful in his addresses to the English people? Why?]

A GREEN DONKEY DRIVER

There dwelt an old man in Monastier, [Footnote: Monastier: a little village in southern France.] of rather unsound intellect according to some, much followed by street−boys, and known to fame as Father Adam. Father Adam had a cart, and to draw the cart a diminutive donkey, not much bigger than a dog, the color of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under−jaw. There was something neat and high−bred, a Quakerish elegance, about the rogue that hit my fancy on the spot.

Our first interview was in Monastier market−place. To prove her good temper, one child after another was set upon her back to ride, and one after another went head over heels into the air; until a want of confidence began to reign in youthful bosoms, and the experiment was discontinued from a dearth of subjects. I was already backed by a deputation [Footnote: Deputation: a group of persons sent to act in behalf of others.] of my friends; but as if this were not enough, all the buyers and sellers came around and helped me in the bargain; and the ass and I and Father Adam were the centre of a hubbub for near half an hour. At length she passed into my service for the consideration of sixty−five francs and a glass of brandy. The sack had already cost eighty francs and two glasses of beer; so that Modestine, as I instantly baptized her, was upon all accounts the cheaper article.

By the advice of a fallacious [Footnote: Fallacious: misleading, deceptive.] local saddler, a leather pad was made for me with rings to fasten on my bundle; and I thoughtfully completed my kit and arranged my toilette. By way of armory and utensils, I took a revolver, a little spirit lamp and pan, a lantern and some halfpenny candles, a jack−knife and a large leather flask. The main cargo consisted of two entire changes of warm clothing, besides my travelling wear of country velveteen, pilot coat, and knitted spencer, some books, and my railway−rug, which, being also in the form of a bag, made me a double castle for cold nights. The permanent larder was represented by cakes of chocolate and tins of Bologna sausage. All this, except what I carried about my person, was easily stowed into the sheepskin bag; and by good fortune I threw in my empty knapsack, rather for convenience of carriage than from any thought that I should want it on my journey. For more immediate needs, I took a leg of cold mutton, a bottle of Beaujolais, [Footnote: Beaujolais: a red wine made in southeastern France.] an empty bottle to carry milk, an egg−beater, and a considerable quantity of black bread and white for myself and donkey.

On the day of my departure I was up a little after five; by six we began to load the donkey; and ten minutes after, my hopes were in the dust. The pad would not stay on Modestine's back for half a moment. I returned it to its maker, with whom I had so contumelious [Footnote: Contumelious: rude and abusive.] a passage that the street outside was crowded from wall to wall with gossips looking on and listening. The pad changed hands with much vivacity; perhaps it would be more descriptive to say that we threw it at each other's heads; and, at any rate, we were very warm and unfriendly, and spoke with a deal of freedom.

I had a common donkey pack−saddle fitted upon Modestine; and once more loaded her with my effects.

The bell of Monastier was just striking nine as I got quit of these preliminary troubles and descended the hill through the common. As long as I was within sight of the windows, a secret shame and the fear of some laughable defeat withheld me from tampering with Modestine. She tripped along upon her four small hoofs with a sober daintiness of gait; from time to time she shook her ears or her tail; and she looked so small under the bundle that my mind misgave me. We got across the ford without difficulty—there was no doubt about the matter, she was docility itself—and once on the other bank, where the road begins to mount through pine−woods, I took in my right hand the unhallowed staff, and with a quaking spirit applied it to the donkey. Modestine brisked up her pace for perhaps three steps, and then relapsed into her former minuet. [Footnote: Minuet: a slow, stately dance.] Another application had the same effect, and so with the third. I am worthy the name of an Englishman, and it goes against my conscience to lay my hand rudely on a female. I desisted, and looked her all over from head to foot; the poor brute's knees were trembling and her breathing was distressed; it was plain that she could not go faster on a hill. God forbid, thought I, that I should brutalize this innocent creature; let her go at her own pace, and let me patiently follow.

What that pace was, there is no word mean enough to describe, it was something as much slower than a walk as a walk is slower than a run; it kept me hanging on each foot for an incredible length of time; in five minutes it exhausted the spirit and set up a fever in all the muscles of the leg. And yet I had to keep close at hand and

measure my advance exactly upon hers; for if I dropped a few yards in to the rear, or went on a few yards ahead, Modestine came instantly to a halt and began to browse. The thought that this was to last from here to Alais [Footnote: Alais: a town in southeastern France not far from the Rhone River.] nearly broke my heart. Of all conceivable journeys, this promised to be the most tedious. I tried to tell myself it was a lovely day; I tried to charm my foreboding spirit with tobacco; but I had a vision ever present to me of the long long roads, up hill and down dale, and a pair of figures ever infinitesimally moving, foot by foot, a yard to the minute, and, like things enchanted in a nightmare, approaching no nearer to the goal.

In the meantime there came up behind us a tall peasant, perhaps forty years of age, of an ironical snuffy countenance, and arrayed in the green tail−coat of the country. He overtook us hand over hand, and stopped to consider our pitiful advance.

“Your donkey,” says he, “is very old?”

I told him, I believed not.

Then, he supposed, we had come far.

I told him we had but newly left Monastier.

“Et vous marchez comme ca!” [Footnote: Et vous marchez comme ca! “and you are moving like that!”] cried he; and, throwing back his head, he laughed long and heartily. I watched him, half prepared to feel offended, until he had satisfied his mirth; and then, “You must have no pity on these animals,” said he; and, plucking a switch out of a thicket, he began to lace Modestine about the stern works, uttering a cry. The rogue pricked up her ears and broke into a good round pace, which she kept up without flagging, and without exhibiting the least symptom of distress, as long as the peasant kept beside us. Her former panting and shaking had been, I regret to say, a piece of comedy.

My *deus ex machina,* [Footnote: Deus ex machina: “the god out of the machine”; some supernatural intervention.] before he left me, supplied some excellent, if inhumane, advice; presented me with the switch, which he declared she would feel more tenderly than my cane; and finally taught me the true cry or masonic word of donkey−drivers, “Proot!” All the time, he regarded me with a comical incredulous air, as I might have smiled over his orthography or his green tail−coat. But it was not my turn for the moment.

I hurried over my midday meal, and was early forth again. But, alas, as we climbed the interminable hill upon the other side, “Proot!” seemed to have lost its virtue. I prooted like a lion, I prooted melliflously [Footnote: Melliflously: sweetly. Find this allusion in “Midsummer Night's Dream,” Act I, Scene 2.] like a sucking−dove; but Modestine would be neither softened nor intimidated. She held doggedly to her pace; nothing but a blow would move her, and that only for a second. I must follow at her heels, incessantly belaboring. A moment's pause in this ignoble toil, and she relapsed into her own private gait. I think I never heard of any one in as mean a situation. I must reach the lake of Bouchet, where I meant to camp, before sundown; and, to have even a hope of this, I must instantly maltreat this uncomplaining animal. The sound of my blows sickened me. Once, when I looked at her, she had a faint resemblance to a lady of my acquaintance who formerly loaded me with kindness; and this increased my horror of my cruelty.

It was blazing hot up the valley, windless, with vehement sun upon my shoulders; and I had to labor so consistently with my stick that the sweat ran into my eyes. Every five minutes, too, the pack, the basket, and the pilot−coat would take an ugly slew [Footnote: Slew: twist.] to one side or the other; and I had to stop Modestine, just when I had got her to a tolerable pace of about two miles an hour, to tug, push, shoulder, and re−adjust the load. And at last, in the village of Ussel, [Footnote: Ussel: a town about one hundred miles northwest of Alais.] saddle and all, the whole hypothec [Footnote: Hypothec: literally, the property of a tenant held by a landlord as security for rent. Here, of course, the property insufficiently secured on the donkey.] turned round and grovelled in the dust, below the donkey's belly. She none better pleased, incontinently drew up and seemed to smile; and a party of one man, two women, and two children came up, and, standing round me in a half−circle, encouraged her by their example.

I disposed it, Heaven knows how, so as to be mildly portable, and then proceeded to steer Modestine through the village. She tried, as was indeed her invariable habit, to enter every house and every courtyard in the whole length, and, encumbered as I was, without a hand to help myself, no words can render an idea of my difficulties. A priest, with six or seven others, was examining a church in process of repair, and his acolytes [Footnote: Acolytes: assistants of the priest during mass.] laughed loudly as they saw my plight. I remembered having

laughed myself when I had seen good men struggling with adversity in the person of a jackass, and the recollection filled me with penitence. That was in my old light days, before this trouble came upon me. God knows at least that I shall never laugh again, thought I. But O, what a cruel thing is a farce to those engaged in it!

A little out of the village, Modestine, filled with the demon, set her heart upon a by−road, and positively refused to leave it. I dropped all my bundles, and, I am ashamed to say, struck the poor sinner twice across the face. It was pitiful to see her lift up her head with shut eyes, as if waiting for another blow. I came very near crying; but I did a wiser thing than that, and sat squarely down by the roadside to consider my situation. Modestine in the meanwhile, munched some black bread with a contrite hypocritical air. It was plain that I must make a sacrifice to the gods of shipwreck. I threw away the empty bottles destined to carry milk; I threw away my own white bread, and, disdaining to act by general average, kept the black bread for Modestine; lastly I threw away the cold leg of mutton and the egg whisk, although this last was dear to my heart.

Thus I found room for everything in the basket, and even stowed the boating−coat on the top. By means of an end of cord I slung it under one arm; and although the cord cut my shoulder, and the jacket hung almost to the ground, it was with a heart greatly lightened that I set forth.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (adapted).

[Footnote: Would you judge that this was the writer's first experience in camping? Why? What is added to the story by attributing human qualities to Modestine? How did she seem to be always putting him in the wrong? Do people ever work such tricks? What characteristics of the author are shown in this sketch? Is the humor of the story one of situation merely? What other selections are similar to this in the style of writing? in the humor?]

A NIGHT IN THE PINES

The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade: there was no outlook, except northeastward upon distant hill−tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down, I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the out−door world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

The stars were clear, colored, and jewel−like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapor stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir−points stood upright and stock−still. By the whiteness of the pack−saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward; but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the color of the sky, as we call the void of space, where it showed a reddish gray behind the pines to where it showed a glossy blue−black between the stars. As if to be more like a pedler, I wear a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at Chasserades and the congregated night caps; with horror of the nocturnal prowesses of clerks and students, of hot theatres, and passkeys and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle, habitable place; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house.

As I lay thus, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high−road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good−will than grace in his performance; but he trolled with ample lungs; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities, some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double; first this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine−woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Footnote: What use does the author make of contrast? What things does he notice? Did you ever sleep at night out of doors? If so, was the night empty of impressions or did you hear and see things? What characteristic things has Stevenson chosen to give you in the picture of camping out at night? What things do you suppose Stevenson most enjoyed in his life out of doors?]

LIFE IN OLD NEW YORK

In those good old days of simplicity and sunshine, a passion for cleanliness was the leading principle in domestic economy, and the universal test of an able housewife.

The front door was never opened, except for marriages, funerals, New Year's Day, the festival of St. Nicholas, or some such great occasion. It was ornamented with a gorgeous brass knocker, which was curiously wrought,—sometimes in the device of a dog, and sometimes in that of a lion's head,—and daily burnished with such religious zeal that it was often worn out by the very precautions taken for its preservation.

The whole house was constantly in a state of inundation, [Footnote: Inundation: a flood.] under the discipline of mops and brooms and scrubbing brushes; and the good housewives of those days were a kind of amphibious [Footnote: Amphibious: able to live in water and on land.] animal, delighting exceedingly to be dabbling in water,—insomuch that an historian of the day gravely tells us that many of his townswomen grew to have webbed fingers, “like unto ducks.”

The grand parlor was the sanctum, where the passion for cleaning was indulged without control. No one was permitted to enter this sacred apartment, except the mistress and her confidential maid, who visited it once a week for the purpose of giving it a thorough cleaning. On these occasions they always took the precaution of leaving their shoes at the door, and entering devoutly [Footnote: Entering devoutly, etc. What Oriental custom is the author alluding to?] in their stocking feet.

After scrubbing the floor, sprinkling it with fine white sand,—which was curiously stroked with a broom into angles and curves and rhomboids,—after washing the windows, rubbing and polishing the furniture, and putting a new branch of evergreens in the fireplace, the windows were again closed to keep out the flies, and the room was kept carefully locked, until the revolution of time brought round the weekly cleaning day.

As to the family, they always entered in at the gate, and generally lived in the kitchen. To have seen a numerous household assembled round the fire, one would have imagined that he was transported to those happy days of primeval simplicity which float before our imaginations like golden visions.

The fireplaces were of a truly patriarchal magnitude, where the whole family, old and young, master and servant, black and white,—nay, even the very cat and dog,—enjoyed a community of privilege, and had each a right to a corner. Here the old burgher would sit in perfect silence, puffing his pipe, looking in the fire with half−shut eyes, and thinking of nothing, for hours together; the good wife on the opposite side, would employ herself diligently in spinning yarn or knitting stockings.

The young folks would crowd around the hearth, listening with breathless attention to some old crone of a negro, who was the oracle of the family, and who, perched like a raven in a corner of the chimney, would croak forth, for a long winter afternoon, a string of incredible stories about New England witches, grisly ghosts, and bloody encounters among Indians.

In these happy days, fashionable parties were generally confined to the higher classes, or noblesse; that is to say, such as kept their own cows, and drove their own wagons. The company usually assembled at three o'clock, and went away about six, unless it was in winter time, when the fashionable hours were a little earlier, that the ladies might reach home before dark.

The tea table was crowned with a huge earthen dish, well stored with slices of fat pork, fried brown, cut up into morsels, and swimming in gravy. The company seated round the genial board, evinced their dexterity in launching their forks at the fattest pieces in this mighty dish,—in much the same manner that sailors harpoon porpoises at sea, or our Indians spear salmon in the lakes.

Sometimes the table was graced with immense apple pies, or saucers full of preserved peaches and pears; but it was always sure to boast an enormous dish of balls of sweetened dough, fried in hog's fat and called doughnuts or olykocks, a delicious kind of cake, at present little known in this city, except in genuine Dutch families.

The tea was served out of a majestic Delft teapot, ornamented with paintings of fat little Dutch shepherds and shepherdesses tending pigs,—with boats sailing in the air, and houses built in the clouds, and sundry other ingenious Dutch fancies. The beaux distinguished themselves by their adroitness in replenishing this pot from a huge copper teakettle. To sweeten the beverage, a lump of sugar was laid beside each cup, and the company

alternately nibbled and sipped with great decorum; until an improvement was introduced by a shrewd and economic old lady, which was to suspend, by a string from the ceiling, a large lump directly over the tea table, so that it could be swung from mouth to mouth.

At these primitive tea parties, the utmost propriety and dignity prevailed,—no flirting nor coquetting; no romping of young ladies; no self−satisfied struttings of wealthy gentlemen, with their brains in their pockets, nor amusing conceits and monkey divertisements [Footnote: Divertisements: diversions, amusements.] of smart young gentlemen, with no brains at all.

On the contrary, the young ladies seated themselves demurely in their rush−bottomed chairs, and knit their own woolen stockings; nor ever opened their lips, excepting to say yah, Mynheer, or yah, Vroww, [Footnote: Yay, Mynheer: “yes, sir.” Yay, Vrow: “yes, madam.”] to any question that was asked them; behaving in all things like decent, well−educated damsels. As to the gentlemen, each of them tranquilly smoked his pipe, and seemed lost in contemplation of the blue and white tiles with which the fireplaces were decorated; wherein sundry passages of Scripture were piously portrayed. Tobit [Footnote: Tobit. The Book of Tobit is part of the Apocrypha.] and his dog figured to great advantage; Haman [Footnote: Haman is the king's counselor in the Book of Esther.] swung conspicuously on his gibbet; and Jonah appeared most manfully leaping from the whale's mouth, like Harlequin [Footnote: Harlequin: the clown in early Italian and later French comedy.] through a barrel of fire.

The parties broke up without noise and without confusion. They were carried home by their own carriages, that is to say, by the vehicles nature had provided them, excepting such of the wealthy as could afford to keep a wagon.

—WASHINGTON IRVING.

[Footnote: Are there any parts of the country where the traditions of the “best parlor” are still kept? Does the early life in New York appear to you attractive or uninteresting? Does the description seem like ridicule? The descendants of the old Dutch families resented Irving's way of making fun of their ancestors. Point out passages which might justify this complaint. Compare this sketch with “A Pine Tree Shilling” in the style of writing, method of description, and humor.]

THE BAZAAR IN MOROCCO

How can I describe the swarming crowds of the bazaar, the constant, noiseless stir of all those bournouses [Footnote: Bournouses: cf. “An Arab Fisherman.”] in the semi−darkness! The little labyrinthine avenues cross each other in every direction, covered with their ancient roofing of wood, or else with trellises of cane, over which grape−vines are trained. Fronting on these passages are the shops, something like holes in a wall as regards size, and in them the turbaned dealers sit squatted, stately and impassible, among their rare knick−knacks. Shops where the same kind of goods are sold are grouped in quarters by themselves. There is the street of the dealers in clothing, where the booths are bright with pink, blue, and orange silks, and with brocades of gold and silver, and where ladies, veiled and draped like phantoms, are posted. There is the street of the leather merchants, where thousands of sets of harness of every conceivable color, for horses, mules, and asses, are hanging from the walls; there are all sorts of objects of strange and ancient fashion for use in the chase or in war: powder−horns inlaid with gold and silver, embroidered belts for sword and musket, travelling bags for caravans and amulets [Footnote: Amulets: ornaments worn as a charm against evil.] to charm away the dangers of the desert. Then there is the street of the workers in brass, where from morning till night is heard the sound of hammers at work on the arabesques [Footnote: Arabesques: a kind of low−relief carving of man and animal figures fantastically interlaced.] of vases and plates; the street of the papooch embroiderers, where all the little dens are filled with velvet, pearls and gold; the street of the furniture decorators; that of the naked, grimy blacksmiths; that of the dyers, with purple or indigo−bedaubed arms, Finally, the quarter of the armorers, who make long flint−lock muskets, thin as cane−stalks, the silver inlaid butt of which is made excessively large so as to receive the shoulder. The Moroccans [Footnote: The Moroccans ... in this country. What similar statement was made in “An Arab Fisherman”?] never have the slightest idea of changing the form adopted by their ancestors, and the shape of their musket is as immutable as all things else are in this country; it seems like a dream to see them at this day making such quantities of these old−fashioned arms.

A stifled hum of unceasing activity arises from the mass of people, clad in their gray woolen robes, thus congregated from afar to buy and sell all sorts of queer small objects. There are sorcerers performing their incantations; bands of armed men dancing the war−dance, with firing of guns, to the sound of the tambourines and the wailing pipes; beggars exposing their sores; negro slaves wheeling their loads; asses rolling in the dust. The ground, of the same grayish shade as the multitude upon it, is covered with all kinds of filth: animal refuse, chicken feathers, dead mice; and the crowd tread down the revolting mass under their trailing slippers.

How far removed is all this life from ours! The activity of this people is as foreign to us as its stagnation and its slumberousness. An indifference which I cannot explain, a disregard of everything, to us quite unknown, characterized these burnous−clad folk even in their greatest stir and bustle. The cowled heads of the men and the veiled heads of the women are occupied by one unchanging dream, even in the midst of their bargaining; five times a day they offer up their prayer, and their thoughts turn, to the exclusion of all besides, upon eternity and death. You will see squalid beggars with the eyes of an inspired man; ragged fellows who have noble attitudes and faces of prophets.

People of all the different tribes meet and mingle promiscuously among themselves. Negroes from the Soudan [Footnote: Soudan: the region south of the Sahara Desert.] and light−colored Arabs: Mussulmans [Footnote: Mussulmans: Mohammedans.] without conviction of the faith, whose women veil only their mouths; and the green−turbaned Derkaouas, merciless fanatics, who turn their heads and spit upon the ground at the sight of a Christian. Every day the “Holy woman,” with wild eyes and vermilion−painted cheeks, is to be seen prophesying in some public place. And the “Holy man,” too, who is incessantly walking like the wandering Jew, always in a hurry and all the while mumbling his prayers.

What queer old jewelry finds a market in Mequinez! [Footnote: Mequinez (Mekinez): a city not far from Fez.] When could the things ever have been new?—There is not one which has not an air of extreme antiquity; old rings for wrists or ankles, worn smooth by centuries of rubbing against human flesh; great clasps for fastening veils; little old silver bottles with coral pendants to hold the black dye with which the eyes are painted, with hooks to fasten them at the belt; boxes to enclose Korans, [Footnote: Korans: the Koran is the sacred book of the

Mohammedans.] carved in arabesques and bearing Solomon's seal; old necklaces of gold sequins, defaced by wear on the necks of women long since dead; and quantities of those large trefoils [Footnote: Trefoil: a shape similar to that of the clover leaf.] in hammered silver, enclosing a green stone, which are hung about the neck to avert the bad effect of the evil−eye. These things are all spread out on little dirty worm−eaten tables, in front of the squatting merchants, in the little dens in the old walls.

The bazaar is very near the Jewish quarter, and several of that race, knowing us to be here, come and offer us trinkets, bracelets, quaint old rings and emerald earrings,—things which they take from the pockets of their black robes with furtive airs, after having cast distrustful looks around. We are also approached by the dealers in the fine woolen rugs and carpets of R'bat, which they throw upon the ground, among the dust, refuse, and bones, to show us the rare designs and splendid colors of their wares.

The sun is getting low; it is time for us to end our bargaining, which has not been conducted without some wrangling, and to leave the sacred city which we are to behold no more, and betake ourselves to our tents.

Before passing the last gate of the enclosure, we halt in a sort of small bazaar, of whose existence we were not previously aware. It is that of the bric−a−brac merchants, and the Lord only knows what queer oddities this kind of shop can display. Ancient arms constitute the principal stock in trade; rusty yataghans, long Souss muskets; then old leather amulets for war or for the chase; ridiculous powder−horns, and also musical instruments; guitars covered with snake−skin, pipes and tambourines. To keep the rubbish which they are selling in countenance, no doubt, the dealers are mostly all broken−down, worn−out, old men.

Undoubtedly the people in this bazaar are very poor and have need to sell their goods, for they crowd around us and press us with their wares. We make several surprising bargains. As the sky grows yellow and the cold breeze of sunset springs up, we are still there, near the lonely gate, beneath the branches of the old trees.

—PIERRE LOTI.

[Footnote: Pierre Loti is the nom−de−plume of a well−known French writer. His real name is Louis Marie Julien Viaud, and he is an officer in the French army. His work is particularly celebrated for the vividness and brilliancy of his descriptions. He has described scenes in Africa, India, China, and on the ocean. One of his best books is “An Iceland Fisherman.”]

[Footnote: Select some of the best examples of minute detail in the descriptions. Note the use of color, form, and smell. How has the author contrasted the civilizations of East and West? Notice how the rapid enumeration of objects gives the effect of passing through the bazaar. Why would a painter find it easy to paint a picture from these written descriptions? What things are sold in the bazaar that show the Eastern skill in handicraft? that show superstition? What contrasts between beauty and sordidness are made in the descriptions?]

A BATTLE OF THE ANTS

One day when I went out to my wood−pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a “duellum,” but a “bellum,” [Footnote: Duellum ... bellum: war.] a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons [Footnote: Myrmidons: a fierce tribe that accompanied Achilles, their king, to the Trojan War.] covered all the hills and vales in my wood−yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I had ever witnessed, the only battle−field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine [Footnote: Internecine: mutually destructive.] war; the red republicans on the one hand and the black imperialists on the other hand. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips; now at noon−day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity [Footnote: Pertinacity: persistency, obstinacy.] than bull−dogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle−cry was Conquer or die. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had dispatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. [Footnote: Return with his shield or upon it. What is the allusion? See Brewer's *Reader's Handbook* under “Spartan Mother.”] He drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore−leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window−sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first−mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously [Footnote: Assiduously: diligently, laboriously.] gnawing at the near foreleg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast−plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle−bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window−sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, [Footnote: Hotel des Invalides: an establishment founded in 1670 at Paris for disabled and infirm soldiers. It contains military trophies and paintings, and a remarkable collection of armor.] I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

—HENRY THOREAU.

[Footnote: What things in the account of the battle show that the writer is a trained observer? Does it add to the interest of the battle to attribute human qualities to the combatants? Why? What touches of humor do you find in the description? Does the author show a sympathetic attitude toward war? Illustrate. What do you know of Thoreau's life at Walden Pond?]

AN AFRICAN PET

Toward twelve o'clock, when we were crossing a kind of high table−land, we heard the cry of a young animal, which we all recognized to be a nshiego mbouve. [Footnote: Nshiego mbouve: a species of ape.] Then all my troubles at once went away out of mind, and I no longer felt either sick or hungry.

We crawled through the bush as silently as possible, still hearing the baby−like cry. At last, coming out into a little cleared space, we saw something running along the ground toward where we stood concealed. When it came nearer, we saw it was a female nshiego running on all fours, with a young one clinging to her breasts. She was eagerly eating some berries, and with one arm supported her little one.

Querlaouen, who had the fairest chance, fired, and brought her down. She dropped without a struggle. The poor little one cried, “Hew! hew! hew!” and clung to the dead body, burying its head there in its alarm at the report of the gun.

We hurried up in great glee to secure our capture. I cannot tell my surprise when I saw that the nshiego baby's face was pure white— *very* white indeed—pallid, but as white as a white child's.

I looked at the mother, but found her black as soot in the face. The little one was about a foot in height. One of the men threw a cloth over its head and secured it till we could make it fast with a rope; for, though it was quite young, it could walk. The old one was of the bald−headed kind, of which I had secured the first known specimen some months before.

I immediately ordered a return to the camp, which we reached toward evening. The little nshiego had been all this time separated from its dead mother, and now when it was put near her body, a most touching scene ensued. The little fellow ran instantly to her, but, touching her on the face and breast, saw evidently that some great change had happened. For a few minutes he caressed her, as though trying to coax her back to life. Then he seemed to lose all hope. His little eyes became very sad, and he broke out in a long, plaintive wail, “Ooee! ooee! ooee!” which made my heart ache for him. He looked quite forlorn, and as though he really felt his forsaken lot. The whole camp was touched at his sorrows, and the women were especially moved.

All this time I stood wonderingly staring at the white face of the creature. It was really marvelous, and quite incomprehensible; and a more strange and weird−looking animal I never saw.

While I stood there, up came two of my hunters and began to laugh at me. “Look, Chelly,” said they, calling me by the name I was known by among them; “look at your friend. Every time we kill gorilla, you tell us look at your black friend. Now, you see, look at your white friend.” Then came a roar at what they thought a tremendous joke.

“Look! he got straight hair, all same as you. See white face of your cousin from the bush! He is nearer to you than gorilla is to us!” And another roar.

“Gorilla no got woolly hair like we. This one straight hair, like you.” “Yes,” said I, “but when he gets old his face is black; and do you not see his nose, how flat it is, like yours?”

Whereat there was a louder laugh than before; for so long as he can laugh, the negro cares little against whom the joke goes. I may as well add here some particulars of the little fellow who excited all this surprise and merriment. He lived five months, and became as tame and docile as a cat. I called him Tommy, to which name he soon began to answer.

In three days after his capture he was quite tame. He then ate crackers out of my hand; ate boiled rice and roasted plantains; [Footnote: Plantain: a fruit which closely resembles the banana.] and drank milk of a goat. Two weeks after his capture he was perfectly tamed, and no longer required to be tied up. He ran about the camp, and, when he went back to Obindij's town, found his way about the village and into the huts just as though he had been raised there.

He had a great affection for me, and used constantly to follow me about. When I sat down, he was not content till he had climbed upon me and hid his head in my breast. He was extremely fond of being petted and fondled, and would sit by the hour while any one stroked his head or back.

He soon began to be a very great thief. When the people left their huts he would steal in and make off with their plantains or fish. He watched very carefully till all had left the house, and it was difficult to catch him in the

act. I flogged him several times, and, indeed, brought him to the conviction that it was wrong to steal; but he could never resist the temptation.

From me he stole constantly. He soon found out that my hut was better furnished with ripe bananas and other fruit than any other; and also he discovered that the best time to steal from me was when I was asleep in the morning. At that time he used to crawl in on his tiptoes, move slyly toward my bed, look at my closed eyes, and, if he saw no movement, with an air of great relief go up and pluck several plantains. If I stirred in the least he was off like a flash, and would presently reenter for another inspection. If my eyes were open when he came in on such a predatory [Footnote: Predatory: plundering.] trip, he at once came up to me with an honest face, and climbed on and caressed me. But I could easily detect an occasional wishful glance toward the bunch of plantains.

My hut had no door, but was closed with a mat, and it was very funny to see Tommy gently raising one corner of this mat to see if I was asleep. Sometimes I counterfeited sleep, and then stirred just as he was in the act of taking off his prize. Then he would drop everything, and make off in the utmost consternation.

He kept the run of mealtimes, and was present at as many meals as possible; that is, he would go from my breakfast to half a dozen others, and beg something at each. But he never missed my breakfast and dinner, knowing by experience that he fared best there. I had a kind of rude table made, on which my meals were served in the open part of my house. This was too high for Tommy to see the dishes; so he used to come in before I sat down, when all was ready, and climb up on the pole which supported the roof. From here he attentively surveyed every dish on the table, and having determined what to have, he would descend and sit down at my side.

If I did not immediately pay attention to him, he began to howl, “Hew! hew! hew!” louder and louder, till, for peace's sake, his wants were satisfied. Of course, I could not tell what he had chosen for dinner of my different dishes, and would offer him first one, then another, till the right one came. If he received what he did not want, he threw it down on the ground with a little shriek of anger and a stamp of his foot; and this was repeated till he was served to his liking. In short, he behaved very much like a badly spoiled child.

If I pleased him quickly, he thanked me by a kind of gentle murmur, like “hooboo,” and would hold out his hand to shake mine. He was very fond of boiled meat,—particularly boiled fish,—and was constantly picking bones he picked up about the town. He wanted always to taste of my coffee, and, when Makondai brought it, would beg of me, in the most serious manner, for some.

I made him a little pillow to sleep on, and this he was very fond of. When he was once accustomed to it he never parted from it more, but dragged it after him wherever he went. If by any chance it was lost, the whole camp knew it by his howls; and sometimes I had to send people to look for it when he had mislaid it on some forest excursion, so that he would stop his noise. He slept on it always, coiled up into a little heap, and only relinquished it when I gave him permission to accompany me into the woods.

As he became more and more used to our ways, he became more impatient of contradiction and more fond of being caressed; and whenever he was thwarted he howled in his disagreeable way. As the dry season came on, it became colder, and Tommy began to wish for company when he slept, to keep him warm. The negroes would not have him for a companion, for he was for them too much like one of themselves. I would not give him room near me. So poor Tommy was reduced to misery, as he seemed to think. But soon I found that he waited till everybody was fast asleep at night, and then crawled in softly next some of his black friends, and slept there till earliest dawn. Then he would up and away undiscovered. Several times he was caught and beaten, but he always tried it again.

He had a great deal of intelligence; and if I had had leisure I think I might have trained him to some kind of good behavior, though I despaired of his thieving disposition. He lived so long, and was growing so accustomed to civilized life, that I began to have great hopes of being able to carry him to America. But alas! poor Tommy. One morning he refused his food, seemed downcast, and was very anxious to be petted and held in the arms. I got all kinds of forest berries for him, but he refused all. He did not seem to suffer, but ate nothing; and the next day, without a struggle, died. Poor fellow! I was very sorry, for he had grown to be quite a pet companion for me; and even the negroes, though he had given them great trouble, were sorry at his death.

—PAUL B. DU CHAILLU.

[Footnote: Paul du Chaillu was born in Paris in 1835. At the age of sixteen he made some exploratory tours around his father's trading station in West Africa, and in 1855 he came to America, where he made his home. Later he undertook a botanic and zoologic exploration to Africa which lasted for four years.]

[Footnote: What qualities of “Tommy” endeared him to his captors? Do you know whether the monkey family is capable of the training which the author hoped to give to his pet? Does the author succeed in making you like or dislike “Tommy”? What human qualities does “Tommy” show? Does this story seem to justify a belief in the origin of species? Could you infer anything about the writer's character from this sketch?]

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

The long−tailed cows of the Lama [Footnote: Lama: a priest or monk of Thibet and Mongolia who professes Lamaism, a kind of Buddhism.] herdsmen, they say, are so restive and difficult to milk, that, to keep them at all quiet, the herdsman has to give them a calf to lick meanwhile. But for this device not a single drop of milk could be obtained from them. One day a herdsman, who lived in the same house with ourselves, came, with a dismal face, to announce that the new−born calf of a favorite cow was dying. It died in the course of the day. The Lama forthwith skinned the poor beast and stuffed it with hay. This proceeding surprised us at first, for the Lama had by no means the air of a man likely to give himself the luxury of a cabinet of natural history. When the operation was completed we found that the hay−calf had neither feet nor head; whereupon it occurred to us that, after all, perhaps it was a pillow that the Lama contemplated. We were in error; but the error was not dissipated till the next morning, when our herdsman went to milk his cow. Seeing him issue forth, the pail in one hand and the hay−calf under the other arm, the fancy occurred to us to follow him. His first proceeding was to put the hay−calf down before the cow; he then turned to milk the cow herself. The mother cow at first opened enormous eyes at her beloved infant; by degrees she stooped her head towards it, then smelt it, sneezed three or four times, and at last began to lick it with the most delightful tenderness.

This spectacle grated against our sensibilities; it seemed to us that he who first invented this parody [Footnote: Parody: a burlesque or mimicking of something, usually written.] upon one of the most touching incidents in nature must have been a man without a heart. A somewhat burlesque circumstance occurred one day to modify the indignation with which this treachery inspired us. By dint of caressing and licking her little calf, the tender parent one fine morning unripped it; the hay issued from within, and the cow, manifesting not the slightest surprise or agitation, proceeded tranquilly to devour the unexpected provender. [Footnote: Provender: food, provisions.]

Poor, simple−minded old cow! But let us laugh at her in the right place. That she should fail to distinguish between the dead bundle and her living offspring is surprising. But being deceived, why should she think it odd to find hay inside? Ignorant of anatomy and physiology, she knows nothing about insides. Had she considered the matter—and it doesn't fall in the line of bovine rumination [Footnote: Bovine rumination: chewing a cud.]—she would doubtless have expected to find in her calf not hay but condensed milk. But if not milk, why not hay? She was well acquainted with the process of putting hay inside, why therefore should she be surprised to find hay inside? But of course she had never bothered her dear sleepy old head about any matter of the sort. And the moral is that we must not expect to find in animals that kind of intelligence which has no bearing whatever upon the life that they lead.

* * * * *

In Scandinavia, as elsewhere, the bear is sometimes domesticated, and if taken young becomes quite tame, and is gentle in its disposition. It is not well, however, to annoy even a well−disposed bear; for Bruin, like the rest of us, resents practical jokes of too unpleasant a nature. A Swedish peasant had one who used to stand on the back of his sledge when he was on a journey, and the beast had so good a balance that it was next to impossible to upset him. One day, however, the peasant amused himself with driving over the very worst ground he could find with the intention, if possible, of throwing the bear off his balance. In this he succeeded, but not in the manner he expected. The bear retained his balance of body, but lost his balance of mind, becoming so irritated that he fetched his master, who was in front of him, a tremendous thump on the shoulder, which frightened the man so much that he had poor Bruin killed immediately.

An American writer gives another instance of ursine [Footnote: Ursine: pertaining to a bear.] irritability. A friend of his would persist in practising the flute near his tame black bear. Bruin bore this in silence for a while, went so far indeed as himself to try and play the flute on his favorite stick; but at last he could stand it no longer, and one morning knocked the flutist's tall hat over his eyes. If any act of retribution is justifiable this was. To practise the flute anywhere within earshot is annoying; to do so in a tall hat would be simply exasperating.

It would be easy to fill a small volume with anecdotes of captive bears. They would show that Bruin is not so stupid as he is sometimes painted, even if they did not altogether justify the Swedish saying that the bear unites

the wit of one man with the strength of ten. Frank Buckland's bear, Tiglath Pileser, was cute enough to know where to find the sweet stuff, of which he, in common with his race, was so inordinately fond; for one day when he had broken his chains he was found in a small grocer's shop seated on the counter, and helping himself with liberal paw to brown sugar and lollipops, to the no small discomfort of the good woman who kept the shop. A black bear in America had a weakness for chickens. His master noticed the thinning of the poultry yard, and suspicion fell on Bruin owing to the feathers which lay round his pole. They could not catch him in the act however. He was too sharp for that, and if disturbed, when he had but half demolished [Footnote: Demolished: destroyed.] a pullet he would hastily sit on the remainder and look as innocent as could be. He was discovered at last, however, by the cackling of a tough old hen which he had failed to silence.

—LLOYD MORGAN (adapted).

[Footnote: Do the incidents related seem real or exaggerated? Has the author used the element of surprise effectively? Illustrate. Would you judge that the writer was a scientist? Why?]

BUCK'S TRIAL OF STRENGTH

John Thornton, owner of the dog, Buck, had said that Buck could draw a sled loaded with one thousand pounds of flour. Another miner bet sixteen hundred dollars that he couldn't, and Thornton, though fearing it would be too much for Buck, was ashamed to refuse; so he let Buck try to draw a load that Matthewson's team of ten dogs had been hauling.

The team of ten dogs was unhitched, and Buck, with his own harness, was put into the sled. He had felt the general excitement, and he felt that in some way he must do a great thing for John Thornton. Murmurs of admiration at his splendid appearance went up. He was in perfect condition, without an ounce of superfluous [Footnote: Superfluous: unnecessary.] flesh, and the one hundred and fifty pounds that he weighed were so many pounds of grit and virility. His furry coat shone with the sheen of silk. Down the neck and across the shoulders, his mane, in repose as it was, half bristled and seemed to lift with every movement, as though excess of vigor made each particular hair alive and active. The great breast and heavy forelegs were no more than in proportion with the rest of the body, where the muscles showed in tight rolls underneath the skin. Men felt these muscles and proclaimed them hard as iron, and the odds went down two to one.

“Sir, sir,” stuttered a member of the latest dynasty, [Footnote: Dynasty: race or succession of kings.] a king of the Skookum Benches. “I offer you eight hundred for him, sir, before the test, sir; eight hundred just as he stands.”

Thornton shook his head and stepped to Buck's side.

“You must stand off from him,” Matthewson protested. “Free play and plenty of room.”

The crowd fell silent; only could be heard the voices of the gamblers vainly offering two to one. Everybody acknowledged Buck a magnificent animal, but twenty fifty−pound sacks of flour bulked too large in their eyes for them to loosen their pouch−strings.

Thornton knelt down by Buck's side. He took his head into his two hands and rested cheek on cheek. He did not playfully shake him, as he was wont, or murmur soft love curses; but he whispered in his ear. “As you love me, Buck. As you love me,” [Footnote: As you love me, Buck. Compare this incident with the words whispered to his horse by the rider in Browning's “Ghent to Aix.”] was what he whispered. Buck whined with suppressed eagerness.

The crowd was watching curiously. The affair was growing mysterious. It seemed like a conjuration. [Footnote: Conjuration: an invoking of supernatural aid.] As Thornton got to his feet, Buck seized his mittened hand between his jaws, pressing in with his teeth and releasing slowly, half−reluctantly. It was the answer, in terms, not of speech, but of love. Thornton stepped well back.

“Now, Buck,” he said.

Buck tightened the traces, then slacked them for a matter of several inches. It was the way he had learned.

“Gee!” Thornton's voice rang out, sharp in the tense silence.

Buck swung to the right, ending the movement in a plunge that took up the slack, and, with a sudden jerk, arrested his one hundred and fifty pounds. The load quivered, and from under the runners arose a crisp crackling.

“Haw!” Thornton commanded.

Buck duplicated the maneuver, [Footnote: Maneuver: dexterous movement.] this time to the left. The crackling turned into a snapping, the sled pivoting and the runners slipping and grating several inches to the side.

The sled was broken out. Men were holding their breaths, intensely unconscious of the fact. “Now, Mush!”

Thornton's command cracked out like a pistol shot. Buck threw himself forward, tightening the traces with a jarring lunge. His whole body was gathered tightly together in a tremendous effort, the muscles writhing and knotting like live things under the silky fur. His great chest was low to the ground, his head forward and down, while his feet were flying like mad, the claws scarring the hard−packed snow in grooves. The sled swayed and trembled, half−started forward. One of his feet slipped, and one man groaned aloud. Then the sled lurched ahead in what appeared a rapid succession of jerks, though it really never came to a dead stop again—half an inch—an inch—two inches. The jerks became less as the sled gained momentum, he caught them up, till it was moving steadily along.

Men gasped and began to breathe again, unaware that for a moment they had ceased to breathe. Thornton was

running behind, encouraging Buck with short, cheery words. The distance had been measured off, and as he neared the pile of firewood which marked the end of the hundred yards, a cheer began to grow and grow, which burst into a roar as he passed the firewood and halted at command. Every man was tearing himself loose, even Matthewson, who had lost his wager. Hats and mittens were flying in the air. Men were shaking hands, it did not matter with whom, and bubbling over in a general incoherent babel. But Thornton fell on his knees beside Buck. Head was against head, and he was shaking him back and forth.

"I'll give you a thousand for him, sir, a thousand," sputtered the Skookum Bench king, "twelve hundred, sir."

Thornton rose to his feet. His eyes were wet. The tears were streaming frankly down his cheeks. "Sir," he said to the Skookum Bench king, "no, sir. You can hold your tongue, sir. It's the best I can do for you, sir."

Buck seized Thornton's hand in his teeth. Thornton shook him back and forth. As though moved by a common feeling, the onlookers drew back to a respectful distance; nor did they again interrupt.

—JACK LONDON.

[Footnote: Notice the simple direct style of writing. Why does the writer dwell on the physical fitness of Buck? Does the understanding between Buck and his master seem unusual? What glimpses of the character of the miners does the story give you? Show how the element of suspense adds to the dramatic force of the story. What is the most interesting point in the narrative?]

ON THE SOLANDER WHALING GROUND

A bright sunny morning; the gentle north−easterly breeze just keeping the sails full as the lumbering whaling−barque “Splendid” dips jerkily to the old southerly swell. Astern, the blue hills around Preservation Inlet [Footnote: Preservation Inlet ... Solander (island) ... Foveaux (strait) ... Stewart Island: places situated on or near the southern end of New Zealand.] lie shimmering in the soft spring sunlight, and on the port beam the mighty pillar of the Solander Rock, lying off the south−western extremity of the New Zealand, is sharply outlined against the steel−blue sky. Far beyond that stern sentinel, the converging shores of Foveaux Strait are just discernible in dim outline through a low haze. Ahead the jagged and formidable rocks of Stewart Island, bathed in a mellow golden glow, give no hint of their terrible appearance what time the Storm−fiend of the south−west cries havoc and urges on his chariot of war.

The keen−eyed Kanaka [Footnote: Kanaka: a native of the Sandwich Islands.] in the fore crow's nest [Footnote: Crow's nest: a perch near the top of the mast to shelter the man on the lookout.] shades his eyes with his hand, peering earnestly out on the weather bow at something which has attracted his attention. A tiny plume of vapor rises from the blue hollows about ten miles away, but so faint and indefinable that it may be only a breaking wavelet's crest caught by the cross wind. Again that little bushy jet breaks the monotony of the sea; but this time there is no mistaking it. Emerging diagonally from the water, not high and thin, but low and spreading, it is an infallible indication to those piercing eyes of the presence of a sperm−whale. The watcher utters a long, low musical cry, “Blo−o−o−w,” which penetrates the gloomy recesses of the fo'ksle [Footnote: Fo'ksle: the forward part of the vessel, under the deck, where the sailors live.] and cuddy, [Footnote: Cuddy: small cabin.] where the slumberers immediately engage in fierce conflict with whales of a size never seen by waking eyes. The officer and white seamen at the main now take up the cry, and in a few seconds all hands are swiftly yet silently preparing to leave the ship. She is put about, making a course which shortly brings her a mile or two to windward of the slowly−moving cachalot. Now it is evident that no solitary whale is in sight, but a great school, gambolling in the bright spray. One occasionally, in pure exuberance of its tremendous vitality, springs twenty feet into the clear air, and falls, a hundred tons of massive flesh, with earthquake−like commotion, back into the sea.

Having got the weather−gage, the boats are lowered; sail is immediately set, and, like swift huge−winged birds, they swoop down upon the prey. Driving right upon the back of the nearest monster, two harpoons are plunged into his body up to the “hitches.” [Footnote: Hitches: a knot or noose that can be readily undone.] The sheet [Footnote: Sheet: the rope that regulates the angle of the sail.] is at once hauled aft, [Footnote: Hauled aft: hauled toward the stern of the ship.] and the boat flies up into the wind; while the terrified cetacean [Footnote: Cetacean: marine mammal.] vainly tries, by tremendous writhing and plunging, to rid himself of the barbed weapon. The mast is unshipped, and preparation made to deliver the coup de grace. [Footnote: Coup de grace: the decisive, finishing stroke.] But finding his efforts futile, the whale has sounded, and his reappearance must be awaited. Two boats' lines are taken out before the slackening comes, and he slowly rises again. Faster and faster the line comes in; the blue depths turn a creamy white, and it is “Stern all” for dear life. Up he comes, with jaws gaping twenty feet wide, gleaming teeth and livid, cavernous throat glittering in the brilliant light. But the boat's crew are seasoned hands, to whom this dread sight is familiar, and orders are quietly obeyed, the boat backing, circling and darting ahead like a sentient thing under their united efforts. So the infuriated mammal is baffled and dodged, while thrust after thrust of the long lances are got home, and streamlets of blood trickling over the edges of his spouthole give warning that the end is near. A few wild circlings at tremendous speed, jaws clashing and blood foaming in torrents from the spiracle, [Footnote: Spiracle: the nostril of a whale.] one mighty leap into the air, and the ocean monarch is dead. He lies just awash, gently undulated by the long, low swell, one pectoral fin slowly waving like some great stray leaf of *Fucus gigantea*. [Footnote: Fucus gigantea: fucus is a kind of tough seaweed.] A hole is cut through the fluke and the line secured to it. The ship, which has been working to windward during the conflict, runs down and receives the line; and in a short time the great inert mass is hauled alongside and secured by the fluke [Footnote: Fluke: one of the lobes of a whale's tail.] chain.

The vessel, bound to that immense body, can only crawl tortoise−like before the wind—lucky, indeed, to have a harbor ahead where the whale may be cut in, even though it be forty miles away. Without that refuge available,

she could not hope to keep the sea and hold her prize through the wild weather, now so near. The breeze is freshening fast, and all sail is made for Port William. So slow is the progress, that it is past midnight before that snug shelter is reached, although for the last four hours the old ship is terribly tried and strained by the press of sail carried to such a gale.

—FRANK BULLEN.

[Footnote: Show how the rapid action in the narrative makes it more dramatic. Why does the danger of the enterprise take so small a part in the narrative? Can you characterize this kind of description?]

AN EPISODE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

With a wild rattle and clatter, and an inhuman abandonment of consideration not easy to be understood in these days, the carriage dashed through streets and swept round corners, with women screaming before it, and men clutching each other and clutching children out of its way. At last, swooping at a street corner by a fountain, one of its wheels came to a sickening little jolt, and there was a loud cry from a number of voices, and the horses reared and plunged.

But for the latter inconvenience, the carriage probably would not have stopped; carriages were often known to drive on, and leave their wounded behind, and why not? But the frightened valet had got down in a hurry, and there were twenty hands at the horses' bridles.

“What has gone wrong?” said Monsieur, calmly looking out.

A tall man in a nightcap had caught up a bundle from among the feet of horses, and had laid it on the basement of the fountain, and was down in the mud and wet, howling over it like a wild animal.

“Pardon, Monsieur the Marquis!” said a ragged and submissive man, “it is a child.”

“Why does he make that abominable noise? Is it his child?”

“Excuse me, Monsieur the Marquis—it is a pity—yes.”

The fountain was a little removed; for the street opened, where it was, into a space some ten or twelve yards square. As the tall man suddenly got up from the ground, and came running at the carriage, Monsieur the Marquis clapped his hand for an instant on his sword hilt.

“Killed!” shrieked the man, in wild desperation, extending both arms at their length above his head, and staring at him. “Dead!”

The people closed round, and looked at Monsieur the Marquis. There was nothing revealed by the many eyes that looked at him but watchfulness and eagerness; there was no visible menacing or anger. Neither did the people say anything; after the first cry, they had been silent, and they remained so. The voice of the submissive man who had spoken, was flat and tame in its extreme submission. Monsieur the Marquis ran his eyes over them all, as if they had been mere rats come out of their holes.

He took out his purse.

“It is extraordinary to me,” said he, “that you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children. One or the other of you is for ever in the way. How do I know what injury you have done my horses. See! Give him that.”

He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up, and all the heads craned forward that all the eyes might look down at it as it fell. The tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry. “Dead!”

He was arrested by the quick arrival of another man, for whom the rest made way. On seeing him, the miserable creature fell upon his shoulder, sobbing and crying, and pointing to the fountain, where some women were stooping over the motionless bundle, and moving gently about it. They were as silent, however, as the men.

“I know all, I know all,” said the last comer. “Be a brave man, my Gaspard! It is better for the poor little plaything to die so, than to live. It has died in a moment without pain. Could it have lived an hour as happily?”

“You are a philosopher, you there,” said the Marquis, smiling. “How do they call you?”

“They call me Defarge.”

“Of what trade?”

“Monsieur the Marquis, vendor [Footnote: Vendor: seller.] of wine.”

“Pick up that, philosopher and vendor of wine,” said the Marquis, throwing him another gold coin, “and spend it as you will. The horses there; are they right?”

Without deigning to look at the assemblage a second time, Monsieur the Marquis leaned back in his seat, and was just being driven away with the air of a gentleman who had accidentally broke some common thing, and had paid for it, and could afford to pay for it; when his case was suddenly disturbed by a coin flying into his carriage, and ringing on its floor.

“Hold!” said Monsieur the Marquis. “Hold the horses! Who threw that?”

He looked to the spot where Defarge the vendor of wine had stood a moment before; but the wretched father was grovelling on his face on the pavement in that spot, and the figure that stood beside him was the figure of a

dark stout woman, knitting.

"You dogs!" said the Marquis, but smoothly, and with an unchanged front, except as to the spots on his nose; "I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth. If I knew which rascal threw at the carriage, and if that brigand were sufficiently near it, he should be crushed under the wheels."

So cowed was their condition, and so long and hard their experience of what such a man could do to them, within the law and beyond it, that not a voice or a hand, or even an eye was raised. Among the men, not one. But the woman who stood knitting looked up steadily, and looked the Marquis in the face. It was not for his dignity to notice it; his contemptuous eyes passed over her, and over all the other rats; and he leaned back in his seat again, and gave the word "Go on!"

—CHARLES DICKENS.

[Footnote: What things are contrasted in the story? Does the incident seem probable from what you know of the period? Can you give any instances from history or fiction to show the attitude of the French aristocracy before the Revolution? Do you know what happened to the Marquis in the "Tale of Two Cities"? Compare the condition of the people in this episode with those in a "Leaf in the Storm."]

THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

These events are succeeded by a few moments of silent waiting. Then suddenly the long lines of soldiers vibrate under a thrill of religious awe; the band, with its great basses and its drums, strikes up a deafening, mournful air. The fifty little black slaves run, run as if their lives were at stake, deploying [Footnote: Deploying: unfolding, opening out.] from their base like the sticks of a fan, resembling bees swarming, or a flock of birds. And yonder, in the shadowy light of the ogive, [Footnote: Ogive: the arch which crosses a Gothic vault diagonally.] upon which all eyes are turned, there appears a tall, brown−faced mannikin, all veiled in white muslin, mounted on a splendid white horse led in hand by four slaves; over his head is held an umbrella of antique form, such an one as must have protected the Queen of Sheba, [Footnote: Queen of Sheba: the queen who came to test the wisdom of Solomon.] and two gigantic negroes, one in pink, the other in blue, wave fly−flaps around the person of the sovereign.

While the strange mannikin, or mummy, almost shapeless, but majestic notwithstanding in his robes of snowy white, is advancing towards us, the music, as if exasperated to madness, wails louder and louder and in a shriller key; it strikes up a slow and distressful religious air, the time of which is accentuated by a frightful beating of the bass−drums. The mannikin's horse rears wildly, restrained with difficulty by the four black slaves, and this music, so mournful and so strange to us, affects our nerves with an indescribable agonizing sensation.

Here, at last, drawn up close beside us, stands this last authentic descendant of Mahomet, crossed with Nubian blood. His attire, of the finest mousseline−de−laine, is of immaculate whiteness. His charger, too, is entirely white, his great stirrups are of gold, and his saddle and equipments are of a very pale green silk, lightly embroidered in a still paler shade of green. The slaves who hold his horse, the one who carries the great red umbrella, and the two—the pink and blue ones—who shake napkins in the monarch's face to drive away imaginary flies, are all herculean negroes whose countenances are wrinkled into fierce smiles; they are all old men, and their gray or white beards contrast with the blackness of their features. This ceremonial of a bygone age harmonizes with the wailing music, and could not suit better the huge walls around us, which rear their crumbling summits high in the air.

This man, who thus presents himself before us with the surroundings which I have described, is the last faithful exponent of a religion, a civilization that is about to die. He is the personification, in fact, of ancient Islam. [Footnote: Islam: the religion of the Mohammedans.] What result can we expect to obtain from an embassy to such a man, who, together with his people, spends his life torpid and motionless among ancient dreams of humanity that have almost disappeared from the surface of the earth? There is not a single point on which we can understand each other; the distance between us is nearly that which would separate us from a caliph [Footnote: Caliph: the head of the Moslem state and defender of the faith.] of Cordova [Footnote: Cordova: a city of Spain. It is famous for its manufactures of leather and silverware. It contains many Moorish antiquities, and is celebrated for its cathedral—once a mosque.] or Bagdad [Footnote: Bagdad: a city of Mesopotamia on the Tigris. It was formerly a city of great importance, and was a celebrated centre of Arabic learning and civilization.] who should come to life again after a slumber of a thousand years. What do we wish to obtain from him, and why have we brought him forth from his impenetrable palace?

His brown, parchment−like face in its setting of white muslin, has regular and noble features; dull, expressionless eyes, the whites of which appear beneath the balls that are half concealed by the drooping lashes; his expression is that of exceeding melancholy, a supreme lassitude, a supreme ennui. He has an appearance of benignity, and is really kindhearted, according to what they say who know him. (If the people of Fez [Footnote: Fez: a city in northern Morocco.] are to be believed, he is even too much so—he does not chop off as many heads as he ought to for the holy cause of Islam.) But this kindheartedness, no doubt, is relative in degree, as was often the case with ourselves in the middle ages; a mildness which is not over−sensitive in the face of shedding blood when there is a necessity for it, nor in face of an array of human heads set up in a row over the fine gateway at the entrance to the palace. Assuredly he is not cruel; he could not be so with that gentle, sad expression. He punishes with severity sometimes, as his divine authority gives him the right to do, but it is said that he finds a still keener pleasure in pardoning. He is a priest and a warrior, and carries each of these characters perhaps to excess; feeling

as deeply as a prophet the responsibility of his heavenly mission, chaste in the midst of his seraglio, [Footnote: Seraglio: a harem.] strict in his attention to onerous [Footnote: Onerous: burdensome.] religious observances, and hereditarily very much of a fanatic—he aims to form himself upon Mahomet [Footnote: Mahomet (Mohammed): the founder of Mohammedanism. Born about 570 in Mecca(?) and died in 632.] as perfectly as may be: all this, moreover, is legible in his eyes, upon his fine countenance, in the upright majesty of his bearing. He is a man whom we can neither understand nor judge in the times we live in, but he is surely a great man, a man of mark.

—PIERKE LOTI (adapted).

[Footnote: What things in the description would tell you that the scene was Oriental? What observations does the author make on the difference between East and West? As a spectator, what things would you find most interesting in the scene? Do you know why the author calls the Sultan's palace impenetrable? Why does the author think that his interview with the Sultan may be useless?]

WALT WHITMAN

I first heard of him among the sufferers on the Peninsula [Footnote: Peninsula: that part of Virginia between the York and James rivers.] after a battle there. Subsequently I saw him, time and again, in the Washington hospitals, or wending his way there, with basket or haversack [Footnote: Haversack: a bag in which a soldier carried his rations when on a march.] on his arm, and the strength of beneficence suffusing his face. His devotion surpassed the devotion of woman. It would take a volume to tell of his kindness, tenderness, and thoughtfulness.

Never shall I forget one night when I accompanied him on his rounds through a hospital filled with those wounded young Americans whose heroism he has sung in deathless numbers. There were three rows of cots, and each cot bore its man. When he appeared, in passing along, there was a smile of affection and welcome on every face, however wan, and his presence seemed to light up the place as it might be lighted by the presence of the God of Love. From cot to cot they called him, often in tremulous tones or in whispers; they embraced him; they touched his hand; they gazed at him. To one he gave a few words of cheer; for another he wrote a letter home; to others he gave an orange, a few comfits, [Footnote: Comfits: sweetmeats.] a cigar, a pipe and tobacco, a sheet of paper or a postage−stamp, all of which and many other things were in his capacious haversack. From another he would receive a dying message for mother, wife, or sweetheart; for another he would promise to go an errand; [Footnote: To go an errand. What is the usual form?] to another, some special friend very low, he would give a manly farewell kiss. He did things for them no nurse or doctor could do, and he seemed to leave a benediction [Footnote: Benediction: blessing.] at every cot as he passed along. The lights had gleamed for hours in the hospital that night before he left it, and, as he took his way towards the door, you could hear the voices of many a stricken hero calling, “Walt, Walt, Walt! come again! come again!”

He carried among them no sentimentalism nor moralizing; spoke not to any man of his “sins,” but gave something good to eat, a buoying [Footnote: Buoying: enlivening, cheering.] word, or trifling gift and a look. He appeared with ruddy face, clean dress, with a flower or a green sprig in the lapel of his coat. Crossing the fields in summer, he would gather a great bunch of dandelion blossoms, and red and while clover, to bring and scatter on the cots, as reminders of out−door air and sunshine.

When practicable, he came to the long and crowded wards of the maimed, the feeble, and the dying, only after preparations as for a festival—strengthened by a good meal, rest, the bath and fresh under−clothes. He entered with a huge haversack slung over his shoulder full of appropriate articles, with parcels under his arms, and protuberant [Footnote: Protuberant: bulging.] pockets. He would sometimes come in summer with a good−sized basket filled with oranges, and would go round for hours paring and dividing them among the feverish and thirsty.

Walt Whitman was of the people, the common people, and always gave out their quality and atmosphere. His commonness, his nearness, as of the things you have always known,—the day, the sky, the soil, your own parents,—were in no way veiled, or kept in abeyance, by his culture or poetic gifts. He was redolent of the human and the familiar. Though capable, on occasions, of great pride and hauteur, yet his habitual mood and presence was that of simple, average, healthful humanity,—the virtue and flavor of sailors, soldiers, laborers, travelers, or people who live with real things in the open air. His commonness rose into the uncommon, the extraordinary, but without any hint of the exclusive or specially favored. He was indeed “no sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them.”

The spirit that animates every page of his book, and that it always effuses, [Footnote: Effuses: sheds, pours out.] is the spirit of common, universal humanity,—humanity apart from creed, schools, conventions, from all special privileges and refinements, as it is in and of itself in its relations to the whole system of things, in contradistinction to the literature of culture which effuses the spirit of the select and exclusive.

His life was the same. Walt Whitman never stood apart from or above any human being. The common people—workingmen, the poor, the illiterate, the outcast—saw themselves in him, and he saw himself in them: the attraction was mutual. He was always content with common, unadorned humanity.

—JOHN BURROUGHS (adapted).

[Footnote: What picture do you get of Whitman in this account? What qualities of Whitman's do you think most endeared him to the soldiers? Was Whitman's carefulness about his personal appearance an evidence of

egotism or altruism? Compare this estimate of Whitman with the “Appreciation of Lincoln.” Are there any points of likeness?]

HEROISM IN HOUSEKEEPING

So many talents are wasted, so many enthusiasms turned to smoke, so many lives spoiled for want of a little patience and endurance, for want of understanding and laying to heart the meaning of THE PRESENT—for want of recognizing that it is not the greatness or littleness of the duty nearest hand, but the spirit in which one does it, which makes one's doing noble or mean! I can't think how people who have any natural ambition, and any sense of power in them, escape going mad in a world like this, without the recognition of that. I know I was very near mad when I found it out for myself (as one has to find out for oneself everything that is to be of any real practical use to one).

Shall I tell you how it came into my head? Perhaps it may be of comfort to you in similar moments of fatigue and disgust. I had gone with my husband to live on a little estate of peat−bog, that had descended to me all the way down from John Welsh, the Covenanter, [Footnote: Covenanter: one who defends the “Solemn League and Covenant" made to preserve the reformed religion in Scotland.] who married a daughter of John Knox. [Footnote: John Knox: a celebrated Scottish reformer, statesman, and writer. Born 1505, died in 1572.] That didn't, I'm ashamed to say, make me feel Craigenputtock [Footnote: Craigenputtock: a town fifteen miles from Dumfries. Here much of Carlyle's best work was done.] a whit less of a peat−bog and a most dreary, untoward place to live at. In fact, it was sixteen miles distant on every side from all the conveniences of life, shops, and even post−office. Further, we were very poor, and further and worst, being an only child, and brought up to great prospects, I was sublimely ignorant of every branch of useful knowledge, though a capital Latin scholar and very fair mathematician.

It behooved me in these astonishing circumstances to learn to sew. Husbands, I was shocked to find, wore their stockings into holes, and were always losing buttons, and I was expected to “look to all that”; also it behooved me to learn to cook! no capable servant choosing to live at such an out−of−the−way place, and my husband having bad digestion, which complicated my difficulties dreadfully. The bread, above all, brought from Dumfries, [Footnote: Dumfries: a town in southern Scotland.] “soured on his stomach” and it was plainly my duty as a Christian wife to bake at home.

So I sent for Cobbett's “Cottage Economy,” and fell to work at a loaf of bread. But, knowing nothing about the process of fermentation or the heat of ovens, it came to pass that my loaf got put into the oven at the time that myself ought to have been put into bed; and I remained the only person not asleep in a house in the middle of a desert.

One o'clock struck! and then two!! and then three!!! And still I was sitting there in the midst of an immense solitude, my whole body aching with weariness, my heart aching with a sense of forlornness and degradation. That I, who had been so petted at home, whose comfort had been studied by everybody in the house, who had never been required to do anything but cultivate my mind, should have to pass all those hours of the night in watching a loaf of bread—which mightn't turn out bread after all!

Such thoughts maddened me, till I laid down my head on the table and sobbed aloud. It was then that somehow the idea of Benvenuto Cellini [Footnote: Benvenuto Cellini: a famous Italian sculptor and worker in gold and silver. Born in 1500(?) died in 1571. His autobiography is one of the most famous of Italian classics. The Perseus of Cellini stands in the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence, and represents the helmeted hero holding up the severed head of Medusa.] sitting up all night watching his Perseus in the furnace came into my head, and suddenly I asked myself: “After all, in the sight of the upper Powers, what is the mighty difference between a statue of Perseus and a loaf of bread, so that each be the thing that one's hand has found to do? The man's determined will, his energy, his patience, his resource were the really admirable things of which his statue of Perseus was the mere chance expression. If he had been a woman, living at Craigenputtock with a dyspeptic husband, sixteen miles from a baker, and he a bad one, all these qualities would have come out more fitly in a good loaf of bread!”

I cannot express what consolation this germ of an idea spread over my uncongenial life during the years we lived at that savage place, where my two immediate predecessors had gone mad, and a third had taken to drink.

—JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

[Footnote: Does the opening paragraph give you any hint as to the source of this extract? What traits of character does the writer show? Can you show the evidence of Scotch Covenanter inheritance in the writer's philosophy? Do you imagine that the writer learned to make bread? Why? In what does the humor of the account lie?]

A YOUTHFUL ACTOR

My dramatic career was brought to a close by an unfortunate circumstance. We were playing the drama of “William Tell, the Hero of Switzerland.” Of course I was William Tell, in spite of Fred Langdon, who wanted to act that character himself. I wouldn't let him, so he withdrew from the company, taking the only bow and arrow we had. I made a cross−bow out of a piece of whalebone, and did very well without him. We had reached that exciting scene where Gessler, the Austrian tyrant, commands Tell to shoot the apple from his son's head. Pepper Whitcomb, who played all the juvenile and women parts, was my son. To guard against mischance, a piece of pasteboard was fastened by a handkerchief over the upper portion of Whitcomb's face, while the arrow to be used was sewed up in a strip of flannel. I was a capital marksman, and the big apple, only two yards distant, turned its russet cheek fairly towards me.

I can see poor little Pepper now, as he stood without flinching, waiting for me to perform my great feat. I raised the cross−bow amid the breathless silence of the crowded audience,—consisting of seven boys and three girls, exclusive of Kitty Collins, who insisted on paying her way in with a clothes−pin. I raised the cross−bow, I repeat. Twang! went the whipcord; but, alas! instead of hitting the apple, the arrow flew right into Pepper Whitcomb's mouth, which happened to be open at the time, and destroyed my aim.

I shall never be able to banish that awful moment from my memory. Pepper's roar, expressive of astonishment, indignation, and pain, is still ringing in my ears. I looked upon him as a corpse, and, glancing not far into the dreary future, pictured myself led forth to execution in the presence of the very same spectators then assembled.

Luckily poor Pepper was not seriously hurt.

—T. B. ALDRICH.

[Footnote: Would you imagine, from this extract, that the book from which it was taken would be interesting? Why? Notice the easy conversational way of telling the incident. What is gained by this? Do you sympathize with Pepper or the author? Why?]

WAR

What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purpose and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil in the British village of Dumdrudge [Footnote: Dumdrudge: a fictitious name.] usually some five hundred souls. From these there are successfully selected, during the French war, say thirty able−bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them. She has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away at the public charges some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there until wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending. At length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and thirty stands fronting thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word “Fire!” is given, and they blow the souls out of one another. And in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart, were the entirest strangers, nay, in so wide a universe, there was even unconsciously, by commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton' their Governors had fallen out, and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.

—CARLYLE.

[Footnote: Does Carlyle write from the usual military standpoint? Does war seem glorious or heroic from this point of view? Is ridicule an effective weapon against wrongs? Do you know of any abuses or wrongs that have been abolished by being shown up as ridiculous? Do you think it likely that the militaristic type of mind can have much sense of humor?]

COON−HUNTING

'Coon−Hunting [Footnote: Coon: raccoon, an animal allied to the bears but much smaller. Its body is gray, varied with black and white, and it has a long full tail banded with black and gray.] is one of the truly American sports of the chase, though its devotees have found difficulty in persuading folks to take their sport seriously. It is, in truth, a comical aspect of hunting, and is scarcely less wanting in dignity than a 'possum [Footnote: Possum: opposum; this animal carries its young in a pouch, like the kangaroo.] chase, which confessedly has none at all. If 'coon−hunting be regarded, as a step higher than that, it loses the advantage at the end, for a fat 'possum is certainly better eating than a 'coon, however rotund. The chase, nevertheless, calls for endurance, since an old 'coon may run four or five miles after he has been started, zigzagging hither and yon, circling round and round trees, leaving a track calculated to make a dog dizzy, swimming streams, and running along the tops of logs and snake−fences, [Footnote: Snake−fence (same as a worm−fence): a zigzag fence of rails which cross at the ends.] hiding his trail with the craftiness of a fox.

The hunt is always organized late at night. Nobody ever heard of a real 'coon−hunt by daylight. The animals are moving about then, leaving trails that, starting at the edge of the woods, lead into the fastnesses where they take refuge. Such trails would grow “cold” before noonday.

There are dogs called 'coon−dogs, but of no particular breed or pedigree. A local pack will consist of Rag, Tag, and Bobtail, with all of Bobtail's friends and connections. One of them is known to be best and takes the lead. They call him the trailer. The rest rush yelping after, and as fast as possible follow the hunters, with torches or lanterns or by moonlight, carrying axes and hatchets, guns, and antidotes for snake−bite in flat, black bottles. Trailer's motley crew catch a sniff of the trail and disappear in the darkness of the brushy woods, baying, barking, yelping, squealing, each after its kind. After them go the whooping hunters, following by ear as the dogs do by nose, for none can use the sense of sight.

Finally a chorus of eager barking in a different tone from what has thus far been heard announces to experienced ears that the dogs have some game at bay. The hunters dispute as to what it is as they crash and stagger on through the gloom, each swearing he knows by his cur's voice what sort of an animal he has in view. Arrived at the scene of the clamor, the dogs are found in frantic excitement around the foot of a tree, in whose shadowy foliage something is supposed to be hidden. Will it be a 'coon, or will it turn out a 'possum, a wild−cat, or mayhap an owl?

First of all a fire is lighted, and its upreaching blaze sends fitful rays of yellow light far among the overhanging branches. Now there may be discerned a hollow near the summit of the trunk, and as dead branches are heaped upon the fire, sharp eyes may detect a triangular head peering out of what was once, perhaps, the front door of a woodpecker's home, and the glints of green are reported to be the glare of a raccoon's eyes.

The nimblest man in the party is sent up the tree, and given a stick wherewith to frighten or poke or pry the cornered animal out of his castle. Compelled to leave the hole, it creeps out upon a limb, and squatting down, snarls at the stranger, who tries to shake loose its hold. But this is a vain attempt. A raccoon can cling like a burr. Try to drag your pet 'coon off the top of a fence, and if he chooses to resist, you may pull him limb from limb before he will let go. So they take the severer method of chopping the branches, until the poor little beast has none left to clutch in falling, and comes down a heap of fur and teeth and claws into the midst of the dogs. Instantly there follows a scrimmage, where often an honest bark is changed in the middle to a yelp of pain, until many a time the melee changes to a ring of hurt and angry but vanquished curs around a 'coon lying on his back, with bloody teeth and claws ready to try it again; and then he is shot by the hunters, merciless to the last. More often the whole tree must be cut down, and the brave 'coon falls with it, and is dashed out among his enemies to fight for his life at the end of his fall.

—ERNEST INGERSOLL (adapted).

[Footnote: What does the phrase “the trails would grow cold” mean? What sense would you find most active if you were on the coon−hunt? Does the author write as an enthusiastic hunter? What impresses you most in the account: the fun or the cruelty of hunting? Does the author succeed in giving you an idea of the excitement of coon−hunting? Would the account have any added interest if it were told in the first person?]

SIGHT IN SAVAGES

In Patagonia [Footnote: Patagonia: the southern part of Argentine Republic.] I added something to my small stock of private facts concerning eyes—their appearance, color, and expression—and vision, subjects which have had a mild attraction for me as long as I can remember. When, as a boy, I mixed with the gauchos [Footnote: Gauchos: these people are of Spanish−American descent. They are the native inhabitants of the pampas, and live chiefly by cattle−raising.] of the pampas, [Footnote: Pampas: vast plains in the southern part of South America, chiefly in the Argentine Republic.] there was one among them who greatly awed me by his appearance and character. He was distinguished among his fellows by his tallness, the thickness of his eyebrows and the great length of his crow−black beard, the form and length of his “facon,” or knife, which was nothing but a sword worn knife−wise, and the ballads he composed, in which were recounted, in a harsh tuneless voice to the strum−strum of a guitar, the hand−to−hand combats he had had with others of his class—fighters and desperadoes—and in which he had always been the victor, for his adversaries had all been slain to a man. But his eyes, his most wonderful feature, impressed me more than anything else; for one was black and the other dark blue. All other strange and extranatural things in nature, of which I had personal knowledge, as, for instance, mushrooms growing in rings, and the shrinking of the sensitive plant when touched, and Will−o'−the−wisps, and crowing hens, and the murderous attack of social birds and beasts on one of their fellows, seemed less strange and wonderful than the fact that this man's eyes did not correspond, but were the eyes of two men, as if there had been two natures and souls in one body. My astonishment was, perhaps, not unaccountable, when we reflect that the eye is to us the window of the mind or soul, that it expresses the soul, and is, as it were, the soul itself materialized.

Some person lately published in England a book entitled “Soul−Shapes,” treating not only of the shapes of souls but also of their color. The letter−press of this work interests me less than the colored plates adorning it. Passing over the mixed and vari−colored souls, which resemble, in the illustrations, colored maps in an atlas, we come to the blue soul, for which the author has a very special regard. Its blue is like that of the commonest type of blue eye. This curious fancy of a blue soul probably originated in the close association of eye and soul in the mind. It is worthy of note that while the mixed and other colored souls seem very much out of shape, like an old felt hat or a stranded jelly fish, the pure colored blue soul is round, like an iris, and only wanted a pupil to be made an eye.

Here again I recall an incident of my boyhood, and am not sure that it was not this that first gave me an interest in the subject.

One summer day, at home, I was attentively listening, out of doors, to a conversation between two men, both past middle life and about the same age, one an educated Englishman, wearing spectacles, the other a native, who was very impressive in his manner, and was holding forth in a loud authoritative voice on a variety of subjects. All at once he fixed his eyes on the spectacles worn by the other, and, bursting into a laugh, cried out, “Why do you always wear those eye−hiding glasses straddled across your nose? Are they supposed to make a man look handsomer or wiser than his fellows, or do you, a sensible person, really believe that you can see better than another man because of them? If so, then all I can say is that it is a fable, a delusion; no man can believe such a thing.”

He was only expressing the feeling that all persons of his class, whose lives are passed in the semi−barbarous conditions of the gauchos on the pampas, experience at the sight of such artificial helps to vision as spectacles. They look through a pane of glass, and it makes the view no clearer, but rather dimmer—how can the two diminutive circular panes carried before the eyes produce any other effect? Besides, their sight as a rule is good when they are young, and as they progress in life they are not conscious of decadence in it; from infancy to old age the world looks, they imagine, the same; the grass as green, the sky as blue as ever, and the scarlet verbenas in the grass just as scarlet. The man lives in his sight; it is his life; he speaks of the loss of it as a calamity great as the loss of reason. To see spectacles amuses and irritates him at the same time; he has the monkey's impulse to snatch the idle things from his fellow's nose; for not only is it useless to the wearer, and a sham, but it is annoying to others, who do not like to look at a man and not properly see his eyes and the thought that is in them.

To the mocking speech he had made, the other good humoredly replied that he had worn glasses for twenty years, that not only did they enable him to see much better than he could without them, but they had preserved his sight from further decadence. Not satisfied with defending himself against the charge of being a fantastical person for wearing glasses, he in his turn attacked the mocker. “How do you know,” he said, “that your own eyesight has not degenerated with time? You can only ascertain that by trying on a number of glasses suited to a variety of sights, all in some degree defective. A score of men with defective sight may be together, and in no two will the sight be the same. You must try on spectacles, as you try on boots, until you find a pair to fit you. You may try mine, if you like; our years are the same, and it is just possible that our eyes may be in the same condition.”

The gaucho laughed a loud and scornful laugh, and exclaimed that the idea was too ridiculous. “What, see better with this thing!” and he took them gingerly in his hand, and held them up to examine them, and finally put them on his nose—something in the spirit of the person who takes a newspaper twisted into the shape of an extinguisher, and puts it on his head. He looked at the other, then at me, then stared all round him with an expression of utter astonishment, and in the end burst out in loud exclamations of delight. For, strange to say, the glasses exactly suited his vision, which, unknown to him, had probably been decaying for years. “Angels of heaven, what is this I see!” he shouted. “What makes the trees look so green—they were never so green before! And so distinct—I can count their leaves! And the cart over there—why, it is red as blood!” And to satisfy himself that it had not just been freshly painted, he ran over to it and placed his hand on the wood. It proved hard to convince him that objects had once looked as distinct, and leaves as green, and the sky as blue, and red paint as red, to his natural sight, as they now did through those magical glasses. The distinctness and brightness seemed artificial and uncanny. But in the end he was convinced, and then he wanted to keep the spectacles, and pulled out his money to pay for them there and then, and was very much put out when their owner insisted on having them back. However, shortly afterwards a pair was got for him; and with these on his nose he galloped about the country, exhibiting them to all his neighbors, and boasting of the miraculous power they imparted to his eyes of seeing the world as no one else could see it.

—W.H. HUDSON.

[Footnote: What things in nature do you think most interested the writer? Do you imagine that he would be a good out−of−doors companion? Why? Was the native in the story the sort of person whom you would expect to “hold forth in an authoritative voice on a variety of subjects”? Do you know what the general attitude of the savage and semi−civilized people is toward strange things? Note the rambling, conversational style in which this sketch is written. Compare it with Stevenson, Aldrich, and Edwards. Note the delightfully whimsical quality of the humor. Can you see any likeness in this to Lamb and Hawthorne?]

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

In this by−place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight [Footnote: Wight: a person.] of the name of Ichabod Crane; who sojourned, or as he expressed it, “tarried,” in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a state which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at the top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing−master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers, where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation, and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill−pond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated “by hook and by crook” the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of this labor of head−work, to have a wonderful easy life of it. The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood; being considered a kind of idle gentleman−like personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea−table of a farm−house, and the addition of a supernumerary [Footnote: Supernumerary: superfluous, unnecessary.] dish of cakes or sweetmeats, or, peradventure, the parade of a silver teapot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays! gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overrun the surrounding trees, reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent millpond, while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half−itinerant life, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, [Footnote: Erudition: learning, scholarship.] for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's “History of New England Witchcraft,” in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spellbound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his school−house, and there con over old Mather's [Footnote: Cotton Mather: an American clergyman, author, and scholar. Born in 1663, died in 1728. He took an active part in the persecutions for witchcraft.] direful tales, until the gathering dusk of the evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farm−house where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination,—the moan of the whippoorwill from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree−toad, that harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech−owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The

fire−flies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if by chance a huge blackhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet [Footnote: Varlet: rascal.] was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm−tunes; and the good people of Sleepy−Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, “in linked sweetness long drawn out,” floating from the distant hill or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them wofully with speculations upon comets and shooting stars; and with the alarming fact that the world did absolutely turn round and that they were half the time topsy−turvy!

But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terror of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which like a sheeted spectre beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet! and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! and how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings!

—WASHINGTON IRVING.

[Footnote: Is this style of writing similar to that of any other selections you have studied? Illustrate. Compare the kind of words used here with the simple diction in “A Youthful Actor,” “In Brittany,” “The Gold Trail.” Does the author's humor seem to you unkindly? What other selections have you studied in which this sort of humor is shown? What courses of study do you imagine were given in Ichabod's school? Does Ichabod seem a real character or only a caricature?]