

VARIOUS

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Содержание

DOMINION HYMN	5
THE MOONLIGHT SONATA	6
THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS	8
THE MINSTREL BOY	9
THE GOOD SAXON KING	10
A SONG	12
BETTER THAN GOLD	13
THE TIGER, THE BRAHMAN, AND THE JACKAL	14
A CANADIAN BOAT-SONG	16
THE SONG SPARROW	17
THE CHILD OF URBINO	19
DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY	22
THE ARROW AND THE SONG	23
THE BATTLE OF THE ANTS	24
THE CURATE AND THE MULBERRY TREE	26
MIRIAM'S SONG	27
THE MEETING OF THE WATERS	28
THE BATTLE OF BALAKLAVA	29
TRUE WORTH	31
LOVE OF COUNTRY	32
HOME AND COUNTRY	33
THE FATHERLAND	34
THE OAK TREE AND THE IVY	35
HARVEST SONG	37
HARVEST TIME	38
HARE-AND-HOUNDS AT RUGBY	39
AN ADJUDGED CASE	42
INDIAN SUMMER	43
A WINTER JOURNEY	45
THE INCHCAPE ROCK	47
THE BIRD OF THE MORNING	49
THE FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK	51
KING HACON'S LAST BATTLE	52
MR. PICKWICK ON THE ICE	54
DICKENS IN CAMP	58
HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR	60
THE LOCKSMITH OF THE GOLDEN KEY	61
TUBAL CAIN	62
THE BUGLE SONG	64
LEIF ERICSSON	65
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	66

Various

Fourth Reader / The Alexandra Readers

DOMINION HYMN

God bless our wide Dominion,
Our fathers' chosen land,
And bind in lasting union,
Each ocean's distant strand,
From where Atlantic terrors
Our hardy seamen train,
To where the salt sea mirrors
The vast Pacific chain.

Our sires when times were sorest
Asked none but aid Divine,
And cleared the tangled forest,
And wrought the buried mine.
They tracked the floods and fountains,
And won, with master hand,
Far more than gold in mountains, —
The glorious prairie land.

Inheritors of glory,
Oh! countrymen! we swear
To guard the flag that o'er ye
Shall onward victory bear.
Where'er through earth's far regions
Its triple crosses fly,
For God, for home, our legions
Shall win, or fighting, die!

— *The Duke of Argyle.*

THE MOONLIGHT SONATA

It happened at Bonn. One moonlight winter's evening I called upon Beethoven, for I wanted him to take a walk, and afterwards to sup with me. In passing through some dark, narrow street, he paused suddenly. "Hush!" he said – "what sound is that? It is from my Sonata in F!" he said, eagerly. "Hark! how well it is played!"

It was a little, mean dwelling, and we paused outside and listened. The player went on; but suddenly there was a break, then the voice of sobbing: "I cannot play any more. It is so beautiful; it is utterly beyond my power to do it justice. Oh, what would I not give to go to the concert at Cologne!"

"Ah, my sister," said her companion, "why create regrets, when there is no remedy? We can scarcely pay our rent."

"You are right; and yet I wish for once in my life to hear some really good music. But it is of no use."

Beethoven looked at me. "Let us go in," he said.

"Go in!" I exclaimed. "What can we go in for?"

"I shall play to her," he said, in an excited tone. "Here is feeling – genius – understanding. I shall play to her, and she will understand it." And, before I could prevent him, his hand was upon the door.

A pale young man was sitting by the table, making shoes; and near him, leaning sorrowfully upon an old-fashioned harpsichord, sat a young girl, with a profusion of light hair falling over her bent face. Both were cleanly but very poorly dressed, and both started and turned towards us as we entered.

"Pardon me," said Beethoven, "but I heard music, and was tempted to enter. I am a musician."

The girl blushed, and the young man looked grave – somewhat annoyed.

"I – I also overheard something of what you said," continued my friend. "You wish to hear – that is, you would like – that is – Shall I play for you?"

There was something so odd in the whole affair, and something so pleasant in the manner of the speaker, that the spell was broken, and all smiled involuntarily.

"Thank you!" said the shoemaker; "but our harpsichord is so wretched, and we have no music."

"No music!" echoed my friend. "How, then, does the young lady –"

He paused, and colored up, for the girl looked full at him, and he saw that she was blind.

"I – I entreat your pardon!" he stammered. "But I had not perceived before. Then you play by ear?"

"Entirely."

"And where do you hear the music, since you frequent no concerts?"

"I used to hear a lady practising near us, when we lived at Brühl two years. During the summer evenings her windows were generally open, and I walked to and fro outside to listen to her."

She seemed shy; so Beethoven said no more, but seated himself quietly before the piano, and began to play. He had no sooner struck the first chord than I knew what would follow – how grand he would be that night. And I was not mistaken. Never, during all the years I knew him, did I hear him play as he then played to that blind girl and her brother. He was inspired; and from the instant that his fingers began to wander along the keys, the very tone of the instrument began to grow sweeter and more equal.

The brother and sister were silent with wonder and rapture. The former laid aside his work; the latter, with her head bent slightly forward, and her hands pressed tightly over her breast, crouched down near the end of the harpsichord, as if fearful lest even the beating of her heart should break the flow of those magical, sweet sounds. It was as if we were all bound in a strange dream, and feared only to wake.

Suddenly the flame of the single candle wavered, sank, flickered, and went out. Beethoven paused, and I threw open the shutters, admitting a flood of brilliant moonlight. The room was almost

as light as before, and the illumination fell strongest upon the piano and player. But the chain of his ideas seemed to have been broken by the accident. His head dropped upon his breast; his hands rested upon his knees; he seemed absorbed in meditation. It was thus for some time.

At length the young shoemaker rose, and approached him eagerly, yet reverently. “Wonderful man!” he said, in a low tone; “who and what are you?”

The composer smiled as only he could smile, benevolently, indulgently, kindly. “Listen!” he said, and he played the opening bars of the Sonata in F.

A cry of delight and recognition burst from them both, and exclaiming, “Then you are Beethoven!” they covered his hands with tears and kisses.

He rose to go, but we held him back with entreaties.

“Play to us once more – only once more!”

He suffered himself to be led back to the instrument. The moon shone brightly in through the window and lit up his glorious, rugged head and massive figure. “I shall improvise a sonata to the moonlight!” looking up thoughtfully to the sky and stars. Then his hands dropped on the keys, and he began playing a sad and infinitely lovely movement, which crept gently over the instrument like the calm flow of moonlight over the dark earth.

This was followed by a wild, elfin passage in triple time – a sort of grotesque interlude, like the dance of sprites upon the sward. Then came a swift, breathless, trembling movement, descriptive of flight and uncertainty, and vague, impulsive terror, which carried us away on its rustling wings, and left us all in emotion and wonder.

“Farewell to you!” said Beethoven, pushing back his chair and turning towards the door – “farewell to you!”

“You will come again?” asked they, in one breath.

He paused and looked compassionately, almost tenderly, at the face of the blind girl. “Yes, yes,” he said, hurriedly; “I shall come again, and give the young lady some lessons. Farewell! I shall soon come again!”

They followed us in silence more eloquent than words, and stood at their door till we were out of sight and hearing.

“Let us make haste back,” said Beethoven, “that I may write out that sonata while I can yet remember it.”

We did so, and he sat over it till long past day-dawn. And this was the origin of that “Moonlight Sonata” with which we are all so fondly acquainted. – Anonymous.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
Which having no chief, overseer, or ruler,
Provideth her meat in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.

– From “*The Book of Proverbs.*”

THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS

Whither away, Robin,
Whither away?
Is it through envy of the maple leaf,
Whose blushes mock the crimson of thy breast,
Thou wilt not stay?
The summer days were long, yet all too brief
The happy season thou hast been our guest:
Whither away?

Whither away, Bluebird,
Whither away?
The blast is chill, yet in the upper sky
Thou still canst find the color of thy wing,
The hue of May.
Warbler, why speed thy southern flight? ah, why,
Thou too, whose song first told us of the spring?
Whither away?

Whither away, Swallow,
Whither away?
Canst thou no longer tarry in the north,
Here, where our roof so well hath screened thy nest?
Not one short day?
Wilt thou – as if thou human wert – go forth
And wander far from them who love thee best?
Whither away?

– *Edmund Clarence Stedman.*

THE MINSTREL BOY

The minstrel boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him;
His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.
"Land of song!" said the warrior bard,
"Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

The minstrel fell, but the foeman's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder;
And said, "No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They shall never sound in slavery!"

– *Thomas Moore.*

THE GOOD SAXON KING

Alfred the Great was a young man three and twenty years of age when he became king of England. Twice in his childhood he had been taken to Rome, where the Saxon nobles were in the habit of going on pilgrimages, and once he had stayed for some time in Paris. Learning, however, was so little cared for in those days that at twelve years of age he had not been taught to read, although he was the favorite son of King Ethelwulf.

But like most men who grew up to be great and good, he had an excellent mother. One day this lady, whose name was Osburga, happened, as she sat among her sons, to read a book of Saxon poetry. The art of printing was not known until long after that period. The book, which was written, was illuminated with beautiful, bright letters, richly painted. The brothers admiring it very much, their mother said, "I shall give it to that one of you who first learns to read." Alfred sought out a tutor that very day, applied himself to learn with great diligence, and soon won the book. He was proud of it all his life.

This great king, in the first year of his reign, fought nine battles with the Danes. He made some treaties with them, too, by which the false Danes swore that they would quit the country. They pretended that they had taken a very solemn oath; but they thought nothing of breaking oaths, and treaties, too, as soon as it suited their purpose, and of coming back again to fight, plunder, and burn.

One fatal winter, in the fourth year of King Alfred's reign, the Danes spread themselves in great numbers over England. They so dispersed the king's soldiers that Alfred was left alone, and was obliged to disguise himself as a common peasant, and to take refuge in the cottage of one of his cowherds, who did not know him.

Here King Alfred, while the Danes sought him far and near, was left alone one day by the cowherd's wife, to watch some cakes which she put to bake upon the hearth. But the king was at work upon his bow and arrows, with which he hoped to punish the false Danes when a brighter time should come. He was thinking deeply, too, of his poor, unhappy subjects, whom the Danes chased through the land. And so his noble mind forgot the cakes, and they were burnt. "What!" said the cowherd's wife, who scolded him well when she came back, and little thought she was scolding the king; "you will be ready enough to eat them by and by, and yet you cannot watch them, idle dog!"

At length the Devonshire men made head against a new host of Danes who landed on their coast. They killed the Danish chief, and captured the famous flag, on which was the likeness of a raven. The loss of this standard troubled the Danes greatly. They believed it to be enchanted, for it had been woven by the three daughters of their king in a single afternoon. And they had a story among themselves, that when they were victorious in battle, the raven would stretch his wings and seem to fly; and that when they were defeated, he would droop.

It was important to know how numerous the Danes were, and how they were fortified. And so King Alfred, being a good musician, disguised himself as a minstrel, and went with his harp to the Danish camp. He played and sang in the very tent of Guthrum, the Danish leader, and entertained the Danes as they feasted. While he seemed to think of nothing but his music, he was watchful of their tents, their arms, their discipline, – everything that he desired to know.

Right soon did this great king entertain them to a different tune. Summoning all his true followers to meet him at an appointed place, he put himself at their head, marched on the Danish camp, defeated the Danes, and besieged them fourteen days to prevent their escape. But, being as merciful as he was good and brave, he then, instead of killing them, proposed peace, – on condition that they should all depart from that western part of England, and settle in the eastern. Guthrum was an honorable chief, and forever afterwards he was loyal and faithful to the king. The Danes under him were faithful, too. They plundered and burned no more, but ploughed and sowed and reaped, and led good honest lives. And the children of those Danes played many a time with Saxon children

in the sunny fields; and their elders, Danes and Saxons, sat by the red fire in winter, talking of King Alfred the Great.

All the Danes, however, were not like these under Guthrum. After some years, more of them came over in the old plundering, burning way. Among them was a fierce pirate named Hastings, who had the boldness to sail up the Thames with eighty ships. For three years there was war with these Danes; and there was a famine in the country, too, and a plague, upon both human creatures and beasts. But King Alfred, whose mighty heart never failed him, built large ships, with which to pursue the pirates on the sea. He encouraged his soldiers, by his brave example, to fight valiantly against them on the shore. At last he drove them all away; and then there was repose in England.

As great and good in peace as he was great and good in war, King Alfred never rested from his labors to improve his people. He loved to talk with clever men, and with travellers from foreign countries, and to write down what they told him for his people to read. He had studied Latin, after learning to read English. And now one of his labors was to translate Latin books into the English-Saxon tongue, that his people might be improved by reading them.

He made just laws that his people might live more happily and freely. He turned away all partial judges that no wrong might be done. He punished robbers so severely that it was a common thing to say that under the great King Alfred, garlands of golden chains and jewels might have hung across the streets and no man would have touched them. He founded schools. He patiently heard causes himself in his court of justice. The great desires of his heart were to do right to all his subjects, and to leave England better, wiser, and happier in all ways than he had found it.

His industry was astonishing. Every day he divided into portions, and in each portion devoted himself to a certain pursuit. That he might divide his time exactly, he had wax torches, or candles, made, all of the same size and notched across at regular distances. These candles were always kept burning, and as they burned down he divided the day into notches, almost as accurately as we now divide it into hours upon the clock. But it was found that the wind and draughts of air, blowing into the palace through the doors and windows, caused the candles to burn unequally. To prevent this the king had them put into cases formed of wood and white horn. And these were the first lanterns ever made in England.

King Alfred died in the year 901; but as long ago as that is, his fame, and the love and gratitude with which his subjects regarded him, are freshly remembered to the present hour. – Charles Dickens.

A SONG

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
There is ever a something sings always:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
And in and out, when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering carelessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair;
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear —
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear —
There is ever a song somewhere!

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black or the midday blue:
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
And the cricket chirrups the whole night through;
The buds may blow and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sere:
But whether the sun or the rain or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

— *James Whitcomb Riley.*

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BETTER THAN GOLD

Better than grandeur, better than gold,
Than rank and title a thousand fold,
Is a healthy body, a mind at ease,
And simple pleasures that always please;
A heart that can feel for a neighbor's woe,
And share his joys with a genial glow;
With sympathies large enough to enfold
All men as brothers, is better than gold.

Better than gold is a thinking mind,
That in the realm of books can find
A treasure surpassing Australian ore,
And live with the great and good of yore: —
The sage's lore and the poet's lay,
The glories of empires passed away.
The world's great dream will thus unfold
And yield a pleasure better than gold.

Better than gold is a peaceful home,
Where all the fireside charities come, —
The shrine of love and the haven of life,
Hallowed by mother, or sister, or wife.
However humble the home may be,
Or tried with sorrow by Heaven's decree,
The blessings that never were bought or sold
And centre there, are better than gold.

— *Mrs. J. M. Winton.*

THE TIGER, THE BRAHMAN, AND THE JACKAL

Once upon a time a tiger was caught in a trap. He tried in vain to get out through the bars, and rolled and bit with rage and grief when he failed.

By chance a poor Brahman came by. "Let me out of this cage, O pious one!" cried the tiger.

"Nay, nay, my friend," replied the Brahman, mildly. "You would probably eat me up if I did."

"Not at all!" declared the tiger, with many vows; "on the contrary, I should be forever grateful, and would serve you as a slave!"

Now, when the tiger sobbed and sighed and wept, the pious Brahman's heart softened, and at last he consented to open the door of the cage. At once, out sprang the tiger, and seizing the poor man, cried: —

"What a fool you are! What is to prevent my eating you now? After being cooped up so long I am terribly hungry."

In vain the Brahman pleaded for his life. All that he could gain was a promise from the tiger to abide by the decision of the first three things that he chose to question concerning the tiger's action.

So the Brahman first asked a tree what it thought of the matter, but the tree replied coldly: —

"What have you to complain about? Don't I give shade and shelter to all who pass by, and don't they in return tear down my branches and pull off my leaves to feed their cattle? Don't complain, but be a man!"

Then the Brahman, sad at heart, went further afield till he saw a buffalo turning a water-wheel. He laid his case before it, but he got no comfort, for the buffalo answered: —

"You are a fool to expect gratitude! Look at me! Do you not see how hard I work? While I was young and strong they fed me on the best of food, but now when I am old and feeble they yoke me here, and give me only the coarsest fodder to eat!"

The Brahman, still more sad, asked the road to give him its opinion of the tiger's conduct.

"My dear sir," said the road, "how foolish you are to expect anything else! Here am I, useful to everybody, yet all, rich and poor, great and small, trample on me as they go past, giving me nothing but the ashes of their pipes and the husks of their grain!"

On hearing this the Brahman turned back sorrowfully. On his way he met a jackal, who called out: —

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Brahman? You look as miserable as a fish out of water!"

Then the Brahman told him all that had occurred.

"How very confusing!" said the jackal, when the recital was ended; "will you tell it over again, for everything has got mixed up in my mind?"

The Brahman told his story all over again, but the jackal shook his head in a distracted sort of way, and still could not understand.

"It's very odd," said he, sadly, "but it all seems to go in at one ear and out the other! Take me to the place where it all happened, and then, perhaps, I shall be able to understand it."

So the cunning jackal and the poor Brahman returned to the cage, and there was the tiger waiting for his victim, and sharpening his teeth and claws.

"You've been away a long time!" growled the savage beast, "but now let us begin our dinner."

"*Our* dinner!" thought the wretched Brahman, as his knees knocked together with fright; "what a delicate way he has of putting it!"

"Give me five minutes, my lord!" he pleaded, "in order that I may explain matters to the jackal here, who is somewhat slow in his wits."

The tiger consented, and the Brahman began the whole story over again, not missing a single detail, and spinning as long a yarn as possible.

“Oh, my poor brain! Oh, my poor brain!” cried the jackal, wringing its paws and scratching its head. “Let me see, how did it all begin? You were in the cage, and the tiger came walking by – ”?

“Pooh! Not at all!” interrupted the tiger. “What a fool you are! *I* was in the cage.”

“Yes, of course!” cried the jackal, pretending to tremble with fright. “Yes! I was in the cage – no, I wasn’t – dear! dear! where are my wits? Let me see – the tiger was in the Brahman, and the cage came walking by. No, no, that’s not it, either! Well, don’t mind me, but begin your dinner, my lord, for I shall never understand it!”

“Yes, you *shall!*” returned the tiger, in a rage at the jackal’s stupidity; “I’ll *make* you understand! Look here. I am the tiger – ”

“Yes, my lord!”

“And that is the Brahman – ”

“Yes, my lord!”

“And that is the cage – ”

“Yes, my lord!”

“And I was in the cage – do you understand?”

“Yes, but please, my lord, how did you get in?”

“How did I get in! Why, in the usual way, of course!” cried the tiger, impatiently.

“O dear me! my head is beginning to whirl again! Please don’t be angry, my lord, but what is the usual way?”

At this the tiger lost all patience, and, jumping into the cage, cried, “This way! Now do you understand how it was?”

“Perfectly!” grinned the jackal, as he instantly shut the door; “and if you will permit me to say so, I think matters will remain as they were!” – Joseph Jacobs.

From “Indian Fairy Tales,” by permission of the author.

A CANADIAN BOAT-SONG

Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.
Soon as the woods on shore look dim,
We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn.
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past!
Why should we yet our sail unfurl?
There is not a breath the blue wave to curl!
But when the wind blows off the shore,
Oh! sweetly we'll rest our weary oar.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past!
Utawas' tide! this trembling moon
Shall see us float over thy surges soon.
Saint of this green Isle! hear our prayers;
Oh! grant us cool heavens and favoring airs.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past!

– *Thomas Moore.*

Attempt the end and never stand in doubt;
Nothing's so hard but search will find it out.

THE SONG SPARROW

There is a bird I know so well,
It seems as if he must have sung
Beside my crib when I was young;
Before I knew the way to spell
The name of even the smallest bird,
His gentle, joyful song I heard.
Now see if you can tell, my dear,
What bird it is, that every year,
Sings “Sweet – sweet – sweet – very merry cheer.”

He comes in March, when winds are strong,
And snow returns to hide the earth;
But still he warms his head with mirth,
And waits for May. He lingers long
While flowers fade, and every day
Repeats his sweet, contented lay;
As if to say we need not fear
The seasons’ change, if love is here,
With “Sweet – sweet – sweet – very merry cheer.”

He does not wear a Joseph’s coat
Of many colors, smart and gay;
His suit is Quaker brown and gray,
With darker patches at his throat.
And yet of all the well-dressed throng,
Not one can sing so brave a song.
It makes the pride of looks appear
A vain and foolish thing to hear
His “Sweet – sweet – sweet – very merry cheer.”

A lofty place he does not love,
But sits by choice, and well at ease,
In hedges, and in little trees
That stretch their slender arms above
The meadow-brook; and there he sings
Till all the field with pleasure rings;
And so he tells in every ear,
That lowly homes to heaven are near
In “Sweet – sweet – sweet – very merry cheer.”

I like the tune, I like the words;
They seem so true, so free from art,
So friendly, and so full of heart,
That if but one of all the birds
Could be my comrade everywhere,

My little brother of the air,
This is the one I'd choose, my dear,
Because he'd bless me, every year,
With "Sweet – sweet – sweet – very merry cheer."

– *Henry van Dyke.*

*From "The Builders and Other Poems."
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The only way to have a friend is to be one.*

THE CHILD OF URBINO

Many, many years ago, in old Urbino, in the pleasant land of Italy, a little boy stood looking out of a high window into the calm, sunshiny day. He was a pretty boy with hazel eyes and fair hair cut straight above his brows. He wore a little blue tunic with some embroidery about the neck of it, and in his hand he carried a little round cap of the same color.

He was a very happy little boy here in this stately, yet kindly, Urbino. He had a dear old grandfather and a loving mother; and he had a father who was very tender to him, and who was full of such true love of art that the child breathed it with every breath he drew. He often said to himself, "I mean to become a painter, too." And the child understood that to be a painter was to be the greatest thing in the world; for this child was Raphael, the seven-year-old son of Giovanni Sanzio.

At this time Urbino was growing into fame for its pottery work, and when its duke wished to send a bridal gift or a present on other festal occasions, he often chose some of his own Urbino ware. Jars and bowls and platters and vases were all made and painted at Urbino, whilst Raphael Sanzio was running about on rosy, infantine feet.

There was a master potter in that day, one Benedetto, who did things rare and fine in the Urbino ware. He lived within a stone's throw of Giovanni Sanzio, and had a beautiful daughter, by name Pacifica. The house of Benedetto was a long, stone building with a porch at the back all overclimbed by hardy rose trees, and looking on a garden in which grew abundantly pear trees, plum trees, and strawberries. The little son of neighbor Sanzio ran in and out of this bigger house and wider garden of Benedetto at his pleasure, for the maiden Pacifica was always glad to see him, and even the master potter would show the child how to lay the color on the tremulous unbaked clay. Raphael loved Pacifica, as he loved everything that was beautiful, and every one that was kind.

Master Benedetto had four apprentices or pupils at that time, but the one that Raphael and Pacifica liked best was one Luca, a youth with a noble, dark beauty of his own. For love of Pacifica he had come down from his mountain home, and had bound himself to her father's service. Now he spent his days trying in vain to make designs fair enough to find favor in the eyes of his master.

One day, as Raphael was standing by his favorite window in the potter's house, his friend, the handsome Luca, who was also standing there, sighed so deeply that the child was startled from his dreams. "Good Luca, what ails you?" he queried, winding his arms about the young man's knees.

"Oh, 'Faello!" sighed the apprentice, wofully, "here is a chance to win the hand of Pacifica if only I had talent. If the good Lord had only gifted me with a master's skill, instead of all the strength of this great body of mine, I might win Pacifica."

"What chance is it?" asked Raphael.

"Dear one," answered Luca, with a tremendous sigh, "you must know that a new order has come in this very forenoon from the Duke. He wishes a dish and a jar of the very finest majolica to be painted with the story of Esther, and made ready in three months from this date. The master has said that whoever makes a dish and a jar beautiful enough for the great Duke shall become his partner and the husband of Pacifica. Now you see, 'Faello mine, why I am so bitterly sad of heart; for at the painting of clay I am but a tyro. Even your good father told me that, though I had a heart of gold, yet I would never be able to decorate anything more than a barber's basin. Alas! what shall I do? They will all beat me;" and tears rolled down the poor youth's face.

Raphael heard all this in silence, leaning his elbows on his friend's knee, and his chin on the palms of his own hands. He knew that the other pupils were better painters by far than his Luca; though not one of them was such a good-hearted youth, and for none of them did the maiden Pacifica care.

Raphael was very pensive for a while; then he raised his head and said, "Listen! I have thought of something, Luca. But I do not know whether you will let me try it."

“You angel child! What would your old Luca deny to you? But as for helping me, put that out of your little mind forever, for no one can help me.”

“Let me try!” said the child a hundred times.

Luca could hardly restrain his shouts of mirth at the audacious fancy. Baby Raphael, only seven years old, to paint a majolica dish and vase for the Duke! But the sight of the serious face of Raphael, looking up with serene confidence, kept the good fellow grave. So utterly in earnest was the child, and so intense was Luca’s despair, that the young man gave way to Raphael’s entreaties.

“Never can I do aught,” he said bitterly. “And sometimes by the help of cherubs the saints work miracles.”

“It shall be no miracle,” replied Raphael; “it shall be myself, and what the dear God has put into me.”

From that hour Luca let him do what he would, and through all the lovely summer days the child shut himself in the garret and studied, and thought, and worked. For three months Raphael passed the most anxious hours of all his sunny young life. He would not allow Luca even to look at what he did. The swallows came in and out of the open window and fluttered all around him; the morning sunbeams came in, too, and made a halo about his golden head. He was only seven years old, but he labored as earnestly as if he were a man grown, his little rosy fingers grasping that pencil which was to make him, in life and death, more famous than all the kings of the earth.

One afternoon Raphael took Luca by the hand and said to him, “Come.” He led the young man up to the table beneath the window where he had passed so many days of the spring and summer. Luca gave a great cry, and then fell on his knees, clasping the little feet of the child.

“Dear Luca,” he said softly, “do not do that. If it be indeed good, let us thank God.”

What Luca saw was the great oval dish and the great jar or vase with all manner of graceful symbols and classic designs wrought upon them. Their borders were garlanded with cherubs and flowers, and the landscapes were the beautiful landscapes round about Urbino; and amidst the figures there was one white-robed, golden-crowned Esther, to whom the child painter had given the face of Pacifica.

“Oh, wondrous boy!” sighed the poor apprentice as he gazed, and his heart was so full that he burst into tears. At last he said timidly: “But, Raphael, I do not see how your marvellous creation can help me! Even if you would allow it to pass as mine, I could not accept such a thing, – not even to win Pacifica. It would be a fraud, a shame.”

“Wait just a little longer, my good friend, and trust me,” said Raphael.

The next morning was a midsummer day. Now, the pottery was all to be placed on a long table, and the Duke was then to come and make his choice from amidst them. A few privileged persons had been invited, among them the father of Raphael, who came with his little son clinging to his hand.

The young Duke and his court came riding down the street, and paused before the old stone house of the master potter. Bowing to the ground, Master Benedetto led the way, and the others followed into the workshop. In all there were ten competitors. The dishes and jars were arranged with a number attached to each – no name to any.

The Duke, doffing his plumed cap, walked down the long room and examined each production in its turn. With fair words he complimented Signor Benedetto on the brave show, and only before the work of poor Luca was he entirely silent. At last, before a vase and a dish that stood at the farthest end of the table, the Duke gave a sudden cry of wonder and delight.

“This is beyond all comparison,” said he, taking the great oval dish in his hands. “It is worth its weight in gold. I pray you, quick, name the artist.”

“It is marked number eleven, my lord,” answered the master potter, trembling with pleasure and surprise. “Ho, you who reply to that number, stand out and give your name.”

But no one moved. The young men looked at one another. Where was this nameless rival? There were but ten of themselves.

“Ho, there!” cried the master, becoming angry. “Can you not find a tongue? Who has wrought this wondrous work?”

Then the child loosened his little hand from his father’s hold and stepped forward, and stood before the master potter.

“I painted it,” he said, with a pleased smile; “I, Raphael.”

Can you not fancy the wonder, the rapture, the questions, the praise, that followed on the discovery of the child artist? The Duke felt his eyes wet, and his heart swell. He took a gold chain from his own neck and threw it over Raphael’s shoulders.

“There is your first reward,” he said. “You shall have many, O wondrous child, and you shall live when we who stand here are dust!”

Raphael, with winning grace, kissed the Duke’s hand, and then turned to his own father.

“Is it true that I have won the prize?”

“Quite true, my child,” said Sanzio, with tremulous voice.

Raphael looked up at Master Benedetto and gently said, “Then I claim the hand of Pacifica.”

“Dear and marvellous child,” murmured Benedetto, “you are only jesting, I know; but tell me in truth what you would have. I can deny you nothing; you are my master.”

“I am your pupil,” said Raphael, with sweet simplicity. “Had you not taught me the secret of your colors, I could have done nothing. Now, dear Master, and you, my lord Duke, I pray you hear me. By the terms of this contest I have won the hand of Pacifica and a partnership with Master Benedetto. I take these rights, and I give them over to my dear friend, Luca, who is the truest man in all the world, and who loves Pacifica as no other can do.”

Signor Benedetto stood mute and agitated. Luca, pale as ashes, had sprung forward and dropped on his knees.

“Listen to the voice of an angel, my good Benedetto,” said the Duke.

The master burst into tears. “I can refuse him nothing,” he said, with a sob.

“And call the fair Pacifica,” cried the sovereign, “and I shall give her myself, as a dower, as many gold pieces as we can cram into this famous vase. Young man, rise up, and be happy!”

But Luca heard not; he was still kneeling at the feet of Raphael. – Louise de la Ramée.

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There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

– *Shakespeare*

DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail;
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

– *George Gordon, Lord Byron.*

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterwards, in an oak,
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

– *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

Fear to do base, unworthy things, is valor!
I never thought an angry person valiant;
Virtue is never aided by a vice.

– *Ben Jonson*

THE BATTLE OF THE ANTS

One day when I went out to my woodpile, 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 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 warriors 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 have ever witnessed, the only battlefield I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war: the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. 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 noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vise 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.

In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle. He saw this unequal combat from afar, – for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red; – 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. 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 took up the chip on which the three 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 gnawing at the near fore-leg 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 breastplate was too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as only war 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 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, 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 David Thoreau.

Oh, many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word at random spoken,
May soothe, or wound, a heart that's broken.

THE CURATE AND THE MULBERRY TREE

Did you hear of the curate who mounted his mare?
And merrily trotted along to the fair?
Of creature more tractable none ever heard;
In the height of her speed she would stop at a word;
But again, with a word, when the curate said "Hey!"
She put forth her mettle and galloped away.

As near to the gates of the city he rode,
While the sun of September all brilliantly glowed,
The good man discovered, with eyes of desire,
A mulberry tree in a hedge of wild-brier;
On boughs long and lofty, in many a green shoot,
Hung, large, black, and glossy, the beautiful fruit.

The curate was hungry and thirsty to boot;
He shrunk from the thorns, though he longed for the fruit;
With a word he arrested his courser's keen speed,
And he stood up erect on the back of his steed;
On the saddle he stood while the creature stood still,
And he gathered the fruit till he took his good fill.

"Sure never," he thought, "was a creature so rare,
So docile, so true, as my excellent mare:
Lo, here now I stand," and he gazed all around,
"As safe and as steady as if on the ground;
Yet how had it been if some traveller this way
Had, dreaming no mischief, but chanced to cry 'Hey'?"

He stood with his head in the mulberry tree,
And he spoke out aloud in his fond reverie;
At the sound of the word the good mare made a push,
And the curate went down in the wild-brier bush.
He remembered too late, on his thorny green bed,
Much that well may be thought cannot wisely be said.

– *Thomas Love Peacock.*

MIRIAM'S SONG

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed, – His people are free!
Sing, – for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave, —
How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed, – His people are free!

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword.
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
For the Lord has looked out from His pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are dashed in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed, – His people are free!

– *Thomas Moore.*

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
As that vale, in whose bosom the bright waters meet;
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Yet it was not that Nature had shed o'er the scene
Her purest of crystals and brightest of green;
'Twas not her soft magic of streamlet or rill,
Oh! no – it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,
And who felt how the best charms of Nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

– *Thomas Moore.*

But truth shall conquer at the last,
For round and round we run,
And ever the right comes uppermost
And ever is justice done.

THE BATTLE OF BALAKLAVA

The cavalry, who had been pursuing the Turks on the right, are coming up to the ridge beneath us, which conceals our cavalry from view. The heavy brigade in advance is drawn up in two lines. The first line consists of the Scots Greys and of their old companions in glory, the Enniskillens; the second, of the 4th Royal Irish, of the 5th Dragoon Guards, and of the 1st Royal Dragoons. The Light Cavalry Brigade is on their left, in two lines also. The silence is oppressive; between the cannon bursts one can hear the champing of bits and the clink of sabres in the valley below. The Russians on their left drew breath for a moment, and then in one grand line dashed at the Highlanders. The ground flies beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dash on towards that thin red streak topped with a line of steel.

As the Russians come within six hundred yards, down goes that line of steel in front and out rings a rolling volley of musketry. The distance is too great; the Russians are not checked, but still sweep onward through the smoke, with the whole force of horse and man, here and there knocked over by the shot of our batteries above.

With breathless suspense every one awaits the bursting of the wave upon the line of Gaelic rock; but ere they come within a hundred and fifty yards, another deadly volley flashes from the levelled rifles, and carries death and terror into the Russians. They wheel about, open files right and left, and fly back faster than they came. "Bravo, Highlanders! well done!" shout the excited spectators. But events thicken. The Highlanders and their splendid front are soon forgotten; men scarcely have a moment to think of this fact, that the 93d never altered their formation to receive that tide of horsemen. "No," said Sir Colin Campbell, "I did not think it worth while to form them even four deep!" The ordinary British line, two deep, was quite sufficient to repel the attack of these Muscovite cavaliers.

Our eyes were, however, turned in a moment on our own cavalry. We saw Brigadier-General Scarlett ride along in front of his massive squadrons. The Russians, their light blue jackets embroidered with silver lace, were advancing on their left, at an easy gallop, towards the brow of the hill. A forest of lances glistened in their rear, and several squadrons of gray-coated dragoons moved up quickly to support them as they reached the summit. The instant they came in sight, the trumpets of our cavalry gave out a warning blast which told us all that in another moment we should see the shock of battle beneath our very eyes. Lord Raglan, all his staff and escort, and groups of officers, the Zouaves, French generals and officers, and bodies of French infantry on the height, were spectators of the scene, as though they were looking on the stage from the boxes of a theatre. Nearly every one dismounted and sat down, and not a word was said.

The Russians advanced down the hill at a slow canter, which they changed to a trot, and at last nearly halted. Their first line was at least double the length of ours – it was three times as deep. Behind them was a similar line, equally strong and compact. They evidently despised their insignificant-looking enemy; but their time was come. The trumpets rang out again through the valley, and the Greys and Enniskilleners went right at the centre of the Russian cavalry. The space between them was only a few hundred yards; it was scarce enough to let the horses "gather way," nor had the men quite space sufficient for the full play of their sword-arms. The Russian line brings forward each wing as our cavalry advance, and threatens to annihilate them as they pass on. Turning a little to their left so as to meet the Russian right, the Greys rush on with a cheer that thrills to every heart – the wild shout of the Enniskilleners rises through the air at the same instant. As lightning flashes through a cloud, the Greys and Enniskilleners pierced through the dark masses of the Russians. The shock was but for a moment. There was a clash of steel and a light play of sword-blades in the air, and then the Greys and the Red-coats disappear in the midst of the shaken and quivering columns. In another moment we see them emerging and dashing on with diminished numbers and in broken order against

the second line, which is advancing against them as fast as it can, to retrieve the fortune of the charge. It was a terrible moment. “God help them! they are lost!” was the exclamation of more than one man, and the thought of many.

It was a fight of heroes. The first line of Russians – which had been smashed utterly by our charge, and had fled off at one flank and towards the centre – were coming back to swallow up our handful of men. By sheer steel and sheer courage, Enniskillener and Scot were winning their desperate way right through the enemy’s squadrons, and already gray horses and red coats had appeared right at the rear of the second mass, when, with irresistible force, like a bolt from a bow, the 1st Royals, the 4th Dragoon Guards, and the 5th Dragoon Guards rushed at the remnants of the first line of the enemy, went through it as though it were made of pasteboard, and, dashing on the second body of Russians, as they were still disordered by the terrible assault of the Greys and their companions, put them to utter rout.

– *William Howard Russell.*

TRUE WORTH

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk doth make man better be,
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear.
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light!
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

– *Ben Jonson.*

LOVE OF COUNTRY

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
From wand'ring on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim: —
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch concentr'd all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonor'd, and unsung.

— *Sir Walter Scott.*

HOME AND COUNTRY

There is a land, of every land the pride,
Beloved of Heaven o'er all the world beside,
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
And milder moons imparadise the night;
A land of beauty, virtue, valor, truth,
Time-tutored age, and love-exalted youth.
The wandering mariner, whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so beautiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air.

In every clime, the magnet of his soul,
Touched by remembrance, trembles to that pole;
For in this land of Heaven's peculiar race,
The heritage of Nature's noblest grace,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride,
While in his softened looks benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend.

Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye
The angel-guard of love and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found?
Art thou a man? – a patriot? – look around;
Oh, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot thy home.

– *James Montgomery.*

What's brave, what's noble, let's do it.

THE FATHERLAND

Where is the true man's fatherland?
Is it where he by chance is born?
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?
O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,
Where God is God, and man is man?
Doth he not claim a broader span
For the soul's love of home than this?
O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear
Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,
Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair —
There is the true man's birthplace grand;
His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another —
Thank God for such a birthright, brother —
That spot of earth is thine and mine!
There is the true man's birthplace grand;
His is a world-wide fatherland!

— *James Russell Lowell.*

THE OAK TREE AND THE IVY

In the greenwood stood a mighty oak. So majestic was he that all who came that way paused to admire his strength and beauty, and all the other trees of the greenwood acknowledged him to be their monarch.

Now it came to pass that the ivy loved the oak tree, and inclining her graceful tendrils where he stood, she crept about his feet, and twined herself around his sturdy and knotted trunk. And the oak tree pitied the ivy.

“Oho!” he cried, laughing boisterously but good-naturedly, – “oho! so you love me, do you, little vine? Very well then; play about my feet, and I shall keep the storms from you and shall tell you pretty stories about the clouds, the birds, and the stars.”

The ivy marvelled greatly at the strange stories the oak tree told; they were stories the oak tree heard from the wind that loitered about his lofty head and whispered to the leaves of his topmost branches. Sometimes the story was about the great ocean in the east, sometimes of the broad prairies in the west, sometimes of the ice king who lived in the north, sometimes of the flower queen who dwelt in the south. Then, too, the moon told a story to the oak tree every night, – or at least every night that she came to the greenwood, which was very often, for the greenwood is a very charming spot, as we all know. And the oak tree repeated to the ivy every story the moon told and every song the stars sang.

“Pray, what are the winds saying now?” or “What song is that I hear?” the ivy would ask; and then the oak tree would repeat the story or the song, and the ivy would listen in great wonderment.

Whenever the storms came, the oak tree cried to the little ivy: “Cling close to me, and no harm shall befall thee! See how strong I am; the tempest does not so much as stir me – I mock its fury!”

Then, seeing how strong and brave he was, the ivy hugged him closely; his brown, rugged breast protected her from every harm, and she was secure.

The years went by; how quickly they flew, – spring, summer, winter, and then again spring, summer, winter, – ah, life is short in the greenwood, as elsewhere! And now the ivy was no longer a weakly little vine to excite the pity of the passer-by. Her thousand beautiful arms had twined hither and thither about the oak tree, covering his brown and knotted trunk, shooting forth a bright, delicious foliage, and stretching far up among his lower branches.

The oak tree was always good and gentle to the ivy. “There is a storm coming over the hills,” he would say. “The east wind tells me so; the swallows fly low in the air. Cling close to me, and no harm shall befall thee.”

Then the ivy would cling more closely to the oak tree, and no harm came to her.

Although the ivy was the most luxuriant vine in all the greenwood, the oak tree regarded her still as the tender little thing he had laughingly called to his feet that spring day many years before, – the same little ivy he had told about the stars, the clouds, and the birds. And just as patiently as in those days, he now repeated other tales the winds whispered to his topmost boughs, – tales of the ocean in the east, the prairies in the west, the ice king in the north, and the flower queen in the south. And the ivy heard him tell these wondrous things, and she never wearied with the listening.

“How good the oak tree is to the ivy!” said the ash. “The lazy vine has naught to do but to twine herself about the strong oak tree and hear him tell his stories!”

The ivy heard these envious words, and they made her very sad; but she said nothing of them to the oak tree, and that night the oak tree rocked her to sleep as he repeated the lullaby a zephyr was singing to him.

“There is a storm coming over the hills,” said the oak tree one day. “The east wind tells me so; the swallows fly low in the air, and the sky is dark. Clasp me round about with thy arms, and nestle close to me, and no harm shall befall thee.”

“I have no fear,” murmured the ivy.

The storm came over the hills and swept down upon the greenwood with deafening thunder and vivid lightning. The storm king himself rode upon the blast; his horses breathed flames, and his chariot trailed through the air like a serpent of fire. The ash fell before the violence of the storm king’s fury, and the cedars, groaning, fell, and the hemlocks, and the pines; but the oak tree alone quailed not.

“Oho!” cried the storm king, angrily, “the oak tree does not bow to me; he does not tremble in my presence. Well, we shall see.”

With that the storm king hurled a mighty thunderbolt at the oak tree, and the brave, strong monarch of the greenwood was riven. Then, with a shout of triumph, the storm king rode away.

“Dear oak tree, you are riven by the storm king’s thunderbolt!” cried the ivy, in anguish.

“Ay,” said the oak tree, feebly, “my end has come; see, I am shattered and helpless.”

“But I am unhurt,” remonstrated the ivy; “and I shall bind up your wounds and nurse you back to health and vigor.”

And so it was that, although the oak tree was ever afterwards a riven and broken thing, the ivy concealed the scars upon his shattered form and covered his wounds all over with her soft foliage.

“I had hoped,” she said, “to grow up to thy height, to live with thee among the clouds, and to hear the solemn voices thou didst hear.”

But the old oak tree said, “Nay, nay, I love thee better as thou art, for with thy beauty and thy love thou comfortest mine age.”

Then would the ivy tell quaint stories to the oak tree, – stories she had learned from the crickets, the bees, the butterflies, and the mice when she was a humble little vine and played at the foot of the majestic oak tree towering in the greenwood. And these simple tales pleased the old and riven oak tree; they were not as heroic as the tales the wind, the clouds, and the stars told, but they were far sweeter, for they were tales of contentment, of humility, of love. So the old age of the oak tree was grander than his youth.

And all who went through the greenwood paused to behold and admire the beauty of the oak tree then; for about his scarred and broken trunk the gentle vine had so entwined her graceful tendrils and spread her fair foliage, that one saw not the havoc of the years nor the ruin of the tempest, but only the glory of the oak tree’s age, which was the ivy’s love and ministering. – Eugene Field.

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HARVEST SONG

The God of harvest praise;
In loud Thanksgiving raise
Hand, heart, and voice.
The valleys laugh and sing,
Forests and mountains ring,
The plains their tribute bring,
The streams rejoice.

Yes, bless His holy name,
And joyous thanks proclaim
Through all the earth.
To glory in your lot
Is comely; but be not
God's benefits forgot
Amid your mirth.

The God of harvest praise,
Hands, hearts, and voices raise,
With sweet accord.
From field to garner throng,
Bearing your sheaves along,
And in your harvest song
Bless ye the Lord.

– *James Montgomery.*

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

HARVEST TIME

Pillowed and hushed on the silent plain,
Wrapped in her mantle of golden grain,

Wearied of pleasuring weeks away,
Summer is lying asleep to-day, —

Where winds come sweet from the wild-rose briers
And the smoke of the far-off prairie fires.

Yellow her hair as the goldenrod,
And brown her cheeks as the prairie sod;

Purple her eyes as the mists that dream
At the edge of some laggard sun-drowned stream;

But over their depths the lashes sweep,
For Summer is lying to-day asleep.

The north wind kisses her rosy mouth,
His rival frowns in the far-off south,

And comes caressing her sunburnt cheek,
And Summer awakes for one short week, —

Awakes and gathers her wealth of grain,
Then sleeps and dreams for a year again.

— *E. Pauline Johnson.*

People are great only as they are kind.

HARE-AND-HOUNDS AT RUGBY

The only incident worth recording here, however, was the first run at hare-and-hounds. On the last Tuesday but one of the half-year, Tom was passing through the hall after dinner, when he was hailed with shouts from Tadpole and several other boys. They were seated at one of the long tables; the chorus of their shouts was, "Come and help us tear up scent."

Tom approached the table in obedience to the summons, always ready to help, and found the party engaged in tearing up old newspapers, copy-books, and magazines into small pieces, with which they were filling four large canvas bags.

"It's the turn of our house to find scent for Big-side hare-and-hounds," exclaimed Tadpole. "Tear away; there's no time to lose."

"I think it's a great shame," said another small boy, "to have such a hard run for the last day."

"Which run is it?" said Tadpole.

"Oh, the Barby run, I hear," answered the other. "Nine miles at least, and hard ground; no chance of getting in at the finish unless you're a first-rate runner."

"Well, I'm going to have a try," said Tadpole.

"I should like to try, too," said Tom.

"Well, then, leave your waistcoat behind, and listen at the door, after roll-call, and you'll hear where the meet is."

After roll-call, sure enough, there were two boys at the door, calling out, "Big-side hare-and-hounds meet at White Hall." And Tom, having girded himself with leather strap, and left all superfluous clothing behind, set off for White Hall, an old gable-ended house some quarter of a mile from the town, with East, whom he had persuaded to join. At the meet they found some forty or fifty boys; and Tom felt sure, from having seen many of them run at football, that he and East were more likely to get in than they.

After a few minutes' waiting, two well-known runners, chosen for the hares, buckled on the four bags filled with scent, compared their watches with those of young Brooke and Thorne, and started off at a long, swinging trot across the fields in the direction of Barby. Then the hounds clustered round Thorne, who explained shortly: "They're to have six minutes' law. We run into the Cock, and every one who comes in within a quarter of an hour of the hares will be counted, if he has been round Barby church."

Then comes a pause of a minute or so, and then the watches are pocketed, and the pack is led through the gateway into the field which the hares had first crossed. Here they break into a trot, scattering over the field to find the first traces of the scent which the hares throw out as they go along.

The old hounds make straight for the likely points, and in a minute a cry of "Forward" comes from one of them, and the whole pack, quickening their pace, make for the spot. The boy who hit the scent first, and the two or three nearest to him, are over the first fence, and making play along the hedgerow in the long-grass field beyond. The rest of the pack rush at the gap already made, and scramble through, jostling one another. "Forward" again, before they are half through; the pace quickens into a sharp run, the tail hounds all straining to get up with the lucky leaders.

They are gallant hares, and the scent lies thick right across another meadow and into a ploughed field, where the pace begins to tell; then over a good hedge with a ditch on the other side, and down a large pasture studded with old thorns, which slopes down to the first brook. The brook is a small one, and the scent lies right ahead up the opposite slope, and as thick as ever. Many a youngster now begins to drag his legs heavily, and feel his heart beat like a hammer, and those farthest behind think that after all it isn't worth while to keep it up.

Tom, East, and Tadpole had a good start, and are well along for such young hands. After rising the slope and crossing the next field, they find themselves up with the leading hounds, who have

overrun the scent and are trying back. They have come a mile and a half in about eleven minutes, a pace which shows that it is the last day. Only about twenty-five of the original starters show here, the rest having already given in. The leaders are busy making casts into the fields on the left and right, and the others get their second winds.

Then comes the cry of "Forward" again from young Brooke, at the extreme left, and the pack settles down to work again, steadily and doggedly, the whole keeping pretty well together. The scent, though still good, is not so thick. There is no need of that, for in this part of the run every one knows the line which must be taken, and so there are no casts to be made, but good downright running and fencing to be done.

All who are now up mean coming in, and they come to the foot of Barby Hill without losing more than two or three more of the pack. This last straight two miles and a half is always a vantage-ground for the hounds, and the hares know it well. They are generally viewed on the side of Barby Hill, and all eyes are on the lookout for them to-day. But not a sign of them appears, so now will be the hard work for the hounds, and there is nothing for it but to cast about for the scent, for it is the hares' turn, and they may baffle the pack dreadfully in the next two miles.

Ill fares it now with our youngsters that they follow young Brooke; for he takes the wide casts round to the left, conscious of his own powers, and loving the hard work. However, they struggle after him, sobbing and plunging along, Tom and East pretty close, and Tadpole some thirty yards behind.

Now comes a brook, with stiff clay banks, from which they can hardly drag their legs; and they hear faint cries for help from the wretched Tadpole, who has fairly stuck fast. But they have too little run left in themselves to pull up for their own brothers. Three fields more, and another check, and then "Forward" called away to the extreme right.

The two boys' souls die within them. They can never do it. Young Brooke thinks so, too, and says kindly, "You'll cross a lane after next field; keep down it, and you'll hit the Dunchurch-road." Then he steams away for the run in, in which he's sure to be first, as if he were just starting. They struggle on across the next field, the "Forwards" getting fainter and fainter, and then ceasing. The whole hunt is out of ear-shot, and all hope of coming in is over.

"Hang it all!" broke out East, as soon as he had wind enough, pulling off his hat and mopping his face, all spattered with dirt and lined with sweat, from which went up a thick steam into the still, cold air. "I told you how it would be. What a thick I was to come! Here we are dead beat, and yet I know we're close to the run in, if we knew the country."

"Well," said Tom, mopping away, and gulping down his disappointment, "it can't be helped. We did our best, anyhow. Hadn't we better find this lane, and go down it as young Brooke told us?"

"I suppose so – nothing else for it," grunted East. "If ever I go out last day again," growl – growl – growl.

So they turned back slowly and sorrowfully, and found the lane, and went limping down it, plashing in the cold, puddly ruts, and beginning to feel how the run had taken the heart out of them. The evening closed in fast, and clouded over, dark, cold, and dreary.

"I say, it must be locking-up, I should think," remarked East, breaking the silence; "it's so dark."

"What if we're late?" said Tom.

"No tea, and sent up to the Doctor," answered East.

The thought didn't add to their cheerfulness. Presently a faint halloo was heard from an adjoining field. They answered it and stopped, hoping for some competent rustic to guide them, when over a gate some twenty yards ahead crawled the wretched Tadpole, in a state of collapse. He had lost a shoe in the brook, and been groping after it up to his elbows in the stiff, wet clay, and a more miserable creature in the shape of a boy seldom has been seen.

The sight of him, notwithstanding, cheered them, for he was some degree more wretched than they. They also cheered him, as he was now no longer under the dread of passing his night alone in the fields. And so in better heart, the three plashed painfully down the never-ending lane. At last it

widened, just as utter darkness set in, and they came out on to a turnpike road, and there paused, bewildered, for they had lost all bearings, and knew not whether to turn to the right or left.

Luckily for them they had not to decide, for lumbering along the road, with one lamp lighted, and two spavined horses in the shafts, came a heavy coach, which after a moment's suspense they recognized as the Oxford coach, the redoubtable Pig and Whistle.

It lumbered slowly up, and the boys, mustering their last run, caught it as it passed, and began scrambling up behind, in which exploit East missed his footing and fell flat on his nose along the road. Then the others hailed the old scarecrow of a coachman, who pulled up and agreed to take them in for a shilling. So there they sat on the back seat, drubbing with their heels, and their teeth chattering with cold, and jogged into Rugby some forty minutes after locking-up. – Thomas Hughes.

AN ADJUDGED CASE

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So the Tongue was the Lawyer and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill and a wig full of learning;
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

“In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship,” he said, “will undoubtedly find
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.”

Then, holding the spectacles up to the court —
“Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

“Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
(’Tis a case that has happened and may be again),
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would or who could wear spectacles then?

“On the whole it appears, and my argument shows
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.”

Then, shifting his side as a lawyer knows how,
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes,
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear without one “if” or “but” —
That whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight, Eyes should be shut.

– *William Cowper*

INDIAN SUMMER

By the purple haze that lies
On the distant rocky height,
By the deep blue of the skies,
By the smoky amber light,
Through the forest arches streaming,
Where Nature on her throne sits dreaming,
And the sun is scarcely gleaming,
Through the cloudless snowy white, —
Winter's lovely herald greets us,
Ere the ice-crowned giant meets us.

A mellow softness fills the air, —
No breeze on wanton wings steals by,
To break the holy quiet there,
Or make the waters fret and sigh,
Or the yellow alders shiver,
That bend to kiss the placid river,
Flowing on and on forever;

But the little waves are sleeping,
O'er the pebbles slowly creeping,
That last night were flashing, leaping,
Driven by the restless breeze,
In lines of foam beneath yon trees.

Dress'd in robes of gorgeous hue,
Brown and gold with crimson blent;
The forest to the waters blue
Its own enchanting tints has lent; —
In their dark depths, life-like glowing,
We see a second forest growing,
Each pictured leaf and branch bestowing
A fairy grace to that twin wood,
Mirror'd within the crystal flood.

'Tis pleasant now in forest shades;
The Indian hunter strings his bow,
To track through dark entangling glades
The antler'd deer and bounding doe, —
Or launch at night the birch canoe,
To spear the finny tribes that dwell
On sandy bank, in weedy cell,
Or pool, the fisher knows right well —
Seen by the red and vivid glow
Of pine-torch at his vessel's bow.

This dreamy Indian summer-day,
Attunes the soul to tender sadness;
We love – but joy not in the ray —
It is not summer's fervid gladness,
But a melancholy glory,
Hovering softly round decay,
Like swan that sings her own sad story,
Ere she floats in death away.

The day declines, what splendid dyes,
In fleckered waves of crimson driven,
Float o'er the saffron sea that lies
Glowing within the western heaven!
Oh, it is a peerless even!

See, the broad red sun has set,
But his rays are quivering yet
Through Nature's vale of violet,
Streaming bright o'er lake and hill,
But earth and forest lie so still,
It sendeth to the heart a chill;
We start to check the rising tear —
'Tis beauty sleeping on her bier.

– *Susannah Moodie.*

A WINTER JOURNEY

On the first day of January, 1776, I set out from Beaver Lake, attended by two men, and provided with dried meat, frozen fish, and a small quantity of roasted maize, sweetened with sugar, which I had brought from Sault Sainte Marie, for this express occasion. Our provisions were drawn by the men, upon sledges made of thin boards, a foot in breadth, and curved upwards in front, after the Indian fashion.

Each day's journey was commenced at three o'clock in the morning. Although the sun did not rise until somewhat late, at no time was it wholly dark, as the northern lights and the reflection of the snow afforded always sufficient light. In addition, the river, the course of which I was ascending, was a guide with the aid of which I was not afraid of being lost.

As the snow was four feet deep, it rendered my progress so much slower than I had expected, that I soon began to fear the want of provisions. Moreover, I had not gone far before the wood began to dwindle away, both in size and quantity, so that it was with difficulty we could collect sufficient for making a fire, and without fire we could not drink; for melted snow was our only resource, the ice on the river being too thick to be penetrated by the axe.

As the weather continued severely cold, I made my two men sleep on the same skin with myself, one on each side, and though this arrangement was particularly beneficial to myself, it increased the comfort of all. At the usual hour in the morning, we attempted to rise, but found that a foot of snow had fallen upon our bed, as well as extinguished and covered our fire. In this situation we remained till daybreak, when, with much exertion, we collected fresh fuel. Proceeding on our journey, we found that we could no longer use our sledges on account of the quantity of newly fallen snow, and we were now compelled to carry our provisions on our backs. Unfortunately they were a diminished burden.

For the next two days the depth of the snow, and the violence of the winds, so greatly retarded our journey that my men began to fear being starved. However, I kept up their courage by telling them that I should certainly kill red deer and elk, of which the tracks were visible along the banks of the river, and on the sides of the hills. But to do this was not easy, as the animals kept within the shelter of the woods, and the snow was too deep to let me seek them there.

A little later our situation was rendered still more alarming by a fresh fall of snow, which added nearly two feet to the depth of that which was on the ground before. At the same time, we were scarcely able to collect enough wood for making a fire to melt the snow. The only trees around us were small willows, and the hills were bare of every vegetable production such as could rear itself above the snow.

On the twentieth, the last remains of our provisions were exhausted, but I had taken the precaution to conceal a cake of chocolate, in reserve for an occasion such as this. Towards evening, my men, after walking the whole day, began to lose their strength, but we, nevertheless, kept on our feet till it was late. When we encamped, I desired them to fill the kettle with snow, and showing them the chocolate, told them it would keep us alive for five days at least, during which we would surely meet with some Indian at the chase. This revived their spirits, and, the kettle being filled with two gallons of water, I put into it one square of the chocolate. The quantity was scarcely sufficient to alter the color of the water, but each of us drank half a gallon of the warm liquid, by which we were much refreshed.

In the morning, we allowed ourselves a similar repast, after finishing which, we marched vigorously for six hours. But now the spirits of my companions again deserted them, and they declared that they neither would, nor could, proceed any further. For myself, they advised me to leave them, and accomplish the journey as I could; as for themselves, they said they must die soon, and might as well die where they were as anywhere else.

While things were in this melancholy state, I filled the kettle, and boiled another square of chocolate. When prepared, I prevailed upon my desponding companions to return to their warm beverage. On taking it, they recovered inconceivably, and, after smoking a pipe, consented to go forward. While their stomachs were comforted by the warm water, they walked well, but, as evening approached, fatigue overcame them, and they relapsed into their former condition. The chocolate being now almost entirely consumed, I began to fear that I must really abandon them, as, had it not been for keeping company with them, I could have advanced double the distance, within the time that had been spent. To my great joy, however, the usual quantity of warm water revived them.

For breakfast the next morning, I put the last square of chocolate into the kettle, and, our meal finished, we began our march. We were surrounded by large herds of wolves, which sometimes came close upon us, and who seemed to know the extremity in which we were, but I carried a gun, and this was our protection. I fired several times, but unfortunately missed at each; for a morsel of wolf's flesh would have afforded us a banquet.

Our misery, nevertheless, was nearer its end than we imagined. Before sunset, we discovered, on the ice, some remains of the bones of an elk, left there by the wolves. Having instantly gathered them, we encamped, and, filling our kettle, prepared ourselves a meal of strong and excellent soup. The greater part of the night was passed in boiling and eating our booty, and early in the morning we felt ourselves strong enough to proceed.

At noon, we saw the horns of a red deer, standing in the snow on the river, and on examination, we found that the whole carcass was with them. By cutting away the ice, we were enabled to lay bare a part of the back and shoulders, and thus procure a stock of food sufficient for the rest of our journey. We accordingly encamped, and employed our kettle to good purpose. We forgot all our misfortunes, and prepared to walk with cheerfulness the twenty leagues, which, as we reckoned, still lay between ourselves and Fort des Prairies. – Alexander Henry.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was as still as she could be;
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The pious Abbot of Aberbrothock
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothock.

The sun in heaven was shining gay;
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen,
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
And fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring;
It made him whistle, it made him sing:
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he: "My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothock."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from his boat,
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sank the bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around;
Quoth Sir Ralph: "The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothock."

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away;
He scoured the seas for many a day;
And now, grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is, they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph: "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish we could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They heard no sound; the swell is strong;
Though the wind has fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock;
Cried they: "It is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,
He cursed himself in his despair:
The waves rush in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But, even in his dying fear,
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear, —
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,
The fiends below were ringing his knell.

— *Robert Southey.*

Thinking is very far from knowing.

THE BIRD OF THE MORNING

If every bird has his vocation, as a poetical French writer suggests, that of the American robin must be to inspire cheerfulness and contentment in men. His joyous “Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheery! Be cheery! Be cheery!” poured out in the early morning from the top branch of the highest tree in the neighborhood, is one of the most stimulating sounds of spring. He must be unfeeling, indeed, who can help deserting his bed and peering through blinds till he discovers the charming philosopher, with head erect and breast glowing in the dawning light, forgetting the cares of life in the ecstasy of song.

Besides admonishing others to cheerfulness, the robin sets the example. Not only is his cheering voice the first in the morning and the last at night, – of the day birds, – but no rain is wet enough to dampen his spirits. In a drizzly, uncomfortable day, when all other birds go about their necessary tasks of food-hunting in dismal silence, the robin is not a whit less happy than when the sun shines; and his cheery voice rings out to comfort not only the inmates of the damp little home in the maple, but the owners of waterproofs and umbrellas who mope in the house.

The most delightful study of one summer, not long ago, was the daily life, the joys and sorrows, of a family of robins, whose pretty castle in the air rested on a stout fork of a maple-tree branch near my window. Day by day I watched their ways till I learned to know them well.

When I first took my seat I felt like an intruder, which the robin plainly considered me to be. He eyed me with the greatest suspicion, alighting on the ground in a terrible flutter, resolved to brave the ogre, yet on the alert, and ready for instant flight should anything threaten. The moment he touched the ground, he would lower his head and run with breathless haste five or six feet; then stop, raise his head as pert as a daisy, and look at the monster to see if it had moved. After convincing himself that all was safe, he would turn his eyes downwards, and in an instant thrust his bill into the soil where the sod was thin, throwing up a little shower of earth, and doing this again and again, so vehemently that sometimes he was taken off his feet by the jerk. Then he would drag out a worm, run a few feet farther in a panic-stricken way, as though “taking his life in his hands,” again look on the ground, and again pull out a worm; all the time in an inconsequent manner, as though he had nothing particular on his mind, and merely collected worms by way of passing the time.

So he would go on, never eating a morsel, but gathering worms till he had three or four of the wriggling creatures hanging from his firm little beak. Then he would fly to a low branch, run up a little way, take another short flight, and thus having, as he plainly intended by this zigzag course, completely deceived the observer as to his destination, he would slip quietly to the nest and quickly dispose of his load. In half a minute he was back again, running and watching, and digging as before. And this work he kept up nearly all day, – in silence, too, for, noisy and talkative as the bird is, he keeps his mouth shut when on the ground. In all my watching of robins for years in several places, I scarcely ever heard one make a sound when on the ground, near a human dwelling.

I was surprised to discover, in my close attention to them, that although early to rise, robins are by no means early to bed. Long after every feather was supposed to be at rest for the night, I would sit out and listen to the gossip, the last words, the scraps of song, – different in every individual robin, yet all variations on the theme, “Be cheery,” – and often the sharp “He he he he he!” so like a girl’s laugh, out of the shadowy depths of the maple.

One of the most interesting entertainments of the later days was to hear the young birds’ music lesson. In the early morning the father would place himself in the thickest part of the tree, not as usual in plain sight on the top, and with his pupil near him would begin, “Cheery! cheery! be cheery!” in a loud, clear voice; and then would follow a feeble, wavering, uncertain attempt to copy the song. Again papa would chant the first strain, and baby would pipe out his funny notes. This was kept up, till in a surprisingly short time, after much daily practice both with the copy and without, I could hardly tell father from son.

The baby robin taken apart from his kind is an interesting study. Before he can fairly balance himself on his uncertain, wavering little legs, or lay claim to more than the promise of a tail, he displays the brave, self-reliant spirit of his race. He utters loud, defiant calls, pecks boldly at an intruding hand, and stands – as well as he is able – staring one full in the face without blinking, asserting by his attitude and by every bristling feather that he is a living being; and, in the depths of your soul, you cannot gainsay him. If you have already, in his helpless infancy, made him captive, the blush of shame arises, and you involuntarily throw wide the prison-doors.

– *Olive Thorne Miller.*

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THE FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK

I'll seek a four-leaved Shamrock in all the fairy dells,
And if I find the charmed leaves, oh, how I'll weave my spells!
I would not waste my magic mite on diamond, pearl, or gold,
For treasure tires the weary sense —*such* triumph is but cold;
But I would play th' enchanter's part in casting bliss around —
Oh, not a tear, nor aching heart, should in the world be found.

To worth I would give honor! – I'd dry the mourner's tears,
And to the pallid lip recall the smile of happier years,
And hearts that had been long estranged, and friends that had grown
cold,
Should meet again – like parted streams – and mingle as of old!
Oh! thus I'd play th' enchanter's part, thus scatter bliss around,
And not a tear, nor aching heart, should in the world be found!

The heart that had been mourning, o'er vanished dreams of love,
Should see them all returning – like Noah's faithful dove;
And Hope should launch her blessed bark on Sorrow's darkening sea,
And Misery's children have an ark and saved from sinking be.
Oh! thus I'd play th' enchanter's part, thus scatter bliss around,
And not a tear, nor aching heart, should in the world be found!

– *Samuel Lover.*

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again, —
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.

KING HACON'S LAST BATTLE

All was over; day was ending
As the foemen turned and fled.
Gloomy red
Glowed the angry sun descending;
While round Hacon's dying bed
Tears and songs of triumph blending
Told how fast the conqueror bled.

“Raise me,” said the king. We raised him —
Not to ease his desperate pain;
That were vain!
“Strong our foe was, but we faced him —
Show me that red field again.”
Then with reverent hands we placed him
High above the battle plain.

Sudden, on our startled hearing,
Came the low-breathed, stern command —
“Lo! ye stand?
Linger not – the night is nearing;
Bear me downwards to the strand,
Where my ships are idly steering
Off and on, in sight of land.”

Every whispered word obeying,
Swift we bore him down the steep,
O'er the deep,
Up the tall ship's side, low swaying
To the storm-wind's powerful sweep,
And his dead companions laying
Round him – we had time to weep.

But the king said, “Peace! bring hither
Spoil and weapons, battle-strown —
Make no moan;
Leave me and my dead together;
Light my torch, and then – begone.”
But we murmured, each to other,
“Can we leave him thus alone?”

Angrily the king replieth;
Flashed the awful eye again
With disdain —
“Call him not *alone* who lieth
Low amidst such noble slain;

Call him not alone who dieth
Side by side with gallant men.”

Slowly, sadly we departed —
Reached again that desolate shore,
Never more
Trode by him, the brave, true-hearted,
Dying in that dark ship’s core!
Sadder keel from land ne’er parted,
Nobler freight none ever bore!

There we lingered, seaward gazing
Watching o’er that living tomb,
Through the gloom —
Gloom which awful light is chasing;
Blood-red flames the surge illumine!
Lo! King Hacon’s ship is blazing;
’Tis the hero’s self-sought doom.

Right before the wild wind driving,
Madly plunging – stung by fire —
No help nigh her —
Lo! the ship has ceased her striving!
Mount the red flames higher, higher,
Till, on ocean’s verge arriving,
Sudden sinks the viking’s pyre. —
Hacon’s gone!

– *Lord Dufferin.*

MR. PICKWICK ON THE ICE

On Christmas morning Mr. Wardle invited Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and his other guests to go down to the pond.

“You skate, of course, Winkle?” said Mr. Wardle.

“Ye – s; oh, yes!” replied Mr. Winkle. “I – I – am *rather* out of practice.”

“Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle,” said Arabella. “I like to see it so much.”

“Oh, it is so graceful,” said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was “elegant,” and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was “swanlike.”

“I should be very happy, I am sure,” said Mr. Winkle, reddening, “but I have no skates.”

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pairs, and the fat boy announced that there were half a dozen more downstairs; whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Mr. Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, – to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies, – which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm when Mr. Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions which they called a reel.

All this time Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his shoes, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

“Now, then, sir,” said Sam, in an encouraging tone, “off with you, and show them how to do it.”

“Stop, Sam, stop!” said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam’s arms with the grasp of a drowning man. “How slippery it is, Sam!”

“Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir,” replied Mr. Weller. “Hold up, sir!”

This last observation of Mr. Weller’s bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice.

“These – these – are very awkward skates; aren’t they, Sam?” inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

“I’m afraid there’s an awkward gentleman in ’em, sir,” replied Sam.

“Now, Winkle,” cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. “Come; the ladies are all anxiety.”

“Yes, yes,” replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. “I’m coming.”

“Just going to begin,” said Sam, endeavoring to disengage himself. “Now, sir, start off!”

“Stop an instant, Sam,” gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. “I find I’ve got a couple of coats at home that I don’t want, Sam. You may have them, Sam.”

“Thank ’ee, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“Never mind touching your hat, Sam,” said Mr. Winkle, hastily. “You needn’t take your hand away to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I’ll give it to you this afternoon, Sam.”

“You’re wery good, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“Just hold me at first, Sam, will you?” said Mr. Winkle. “There – that’s right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast.”

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and unswanlike manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the bank, "Sam!"

"Sir?"

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor calling? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian, and in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind on skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his face.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick, firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the bystanders; and beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words, "You're a humbug, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I shall speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With those words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavors cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy sliding which is currently called "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a postman's knock upon it with the other. It was a good, long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks like a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Mr. Wardle.

"Ah, it does indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh, do, please, Mr. Pickwick!" cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh, pooh! Nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterized all his proceedings. "Here, I'll keep you company; come along!" And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat, took two or three short runs, stopped as often, and at last took another run and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

“Keep the pot a-boiling, sir,” said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other’s heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony; to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up; to see him gradually expend the painful force he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started; to contemplate the playful smile which mantled his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so and ran after his predecessor; his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles; and when he was knocked down (which happened on the average of every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank with an ardor and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp, smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr. Pickwick’s hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface, and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the men turned pale and the women fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed with frenzied eagerness at the spot where their leader had gone down; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming “Fire!” with all his might.

It was at this moment, when Mr. Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

“Keep yourself up for an instant – for only one instant!” bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

“Yes, do, let me implore you – for my sake!” roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected.

“Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?” said Wardle.

“Yes, certainly,” replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. “I fell upon my back. I couldn’t get on my feet at first.”

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick’s coat as was yet visible bore testimony to the truth of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy’s suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valor were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

“Oh, he’ll catch his death of cold,” said Emily.

“Let me wrap this shawl round you,” said Arabella.

“Ah, that’s the best thing you can do,” said Wardle; “and when you’ve got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly.”

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller, presenting the singular appearance of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Mr. Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where he paused not an instant till he was snug in bed. – Charles Dickens.

DICKENS IN CAMP

Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow.

The roaring camp-fire, with rude humor, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the tale anew;

And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of "Little Nell."

Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy, – for the reader
Was youngest of them all, —
But as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp with "Nell" on English meadows
Wandered, and lost their way.

And so, in mountain solitudes, o'ertaken
As by some spell divine —
Their cares drop from them, like the needles shaken
From out the gusty pine.

Lost is that camp, and wasted all its fire; —
And he who wrought that spell?
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

Lost is that camp! but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines' incense all the pensive glory
That fills the Kentish hills.

And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreaths entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,
This spray of Western pine!

– *Francis Bret Harte.*

HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

— *Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

The world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again.

— *Kingsley.*

THE LOCKSMITH OF THE GOLDEN KEY

From the workshop of the Golden Key there issued forth a tinkling sound, so merry and good-humored that it suggested the idea of some one working blithely, and made quite pleasant music. *Tink, tink, tink*— clear as a silver bell, and audible at every pause of the street's harsher noises, as though it said, "I don't care; nothing puts me out; I am resolved to be happy."

Women scolded, children squalled, heavy carts went rumbling by, horrible cries proceeded from the lungs of hawkers. Still it struck in again, no higher, no lower, no louder, no softer; not thrusting itself on people's notice a bit the more for having been outdone by louder sounds —*tink, tink, tink, tink*.

It was a perfect embodiment of the still small voice, free from all cold, hoarseness, huskiness, or unhealthiness of any kind. Foot-passengers slackened their pace, and were disposed to linger near it. Neighbors who had got up sullen that morning felt good-humor stealing on them as they heard it, and by degrees became quite sprightly. Mothers danced their babies to its ringing — still the same magical *tink, tink, tink*, came gayly from the workshop of the Golden Key.

Who but the locksmith could have made such music? A gleam of sun, shining through the unshaded window, and checkering the dark workshop with a broad patch of light, fell full upon him, as though attracted by his sunny heart. There he stood, working at his anvil, his face radiant with exercise and gladness — the easiest, freest, happiest man in all the world.

Beside him sat a sleek cat, purring and winking in the light, and falling every now and then into an idle doze, as from excess of comfort. The very locks that hung around had something jovial in their rust, and seemed like gouty old gentlemen of hearty natures, disposed to joke on their infirmities.

There was nothing surly or severe in the whole scene. It seemed impossible that any one of the innumerable keys could fit a churlish strong-box or a prison-door. Store-houses of good things, rooms where there were fires, books, gossip, and cheering laughter — these were their proper sphere of action. Places of distrust and cruelty and restraint they would have quadruple locked forever.

Tink, tink, tink. No man who hammered on at a dull, monotonous duty could have brought such cheerful notes from steel and iron; none but a chirping, healthy, honest-hearted fellow, who made the best of everything, and felt kindly towards everybody, could have done it for an instant. He might have been a coppersmith, and still been musical. If he had sat on a jolting wagon, full of rods of iron, it seemed as if he would have brought some harmony out of it. — Charles Dickens.

A clear conscience is better than untold riches.

TUBAL CAIN

Old Tubal Cain was a man of might,
In the days when earth was young;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright,
The strokes of his hammer rung:
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron glowing clear,
Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
As he fashioned the sword and the spear.
And he sang: "Hurrah for my handiwork!
Hurrah for the spear and the sword!
Hurrah for the hand that shall wield them well,
For he shall be king and lord!"

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
As he wrought by his roaring fire;
And each one prayed for a strong steel blade
As the crown of his desire.
And he made them weapons sharp and strong,
Till they shouted loud for glee;
And gave him gifts of pearls and gold,
And spoils of the forest free.
And they sang: "Hurrah for Tubal Cain,
Who hath given us strength anew!
Hurrah for the smith, hurrah for the fire,
And hurrah for the metal true!"

But a sudden change came o'er his heart,
Ere the setting of the sun;
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain
For the evil he had done;
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind;
That the land was red with the blood they shed,
In their lust for carnage blind.
And he said: "Alas! that ever I made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man!"

And for many a day old Tubal Cain
Sat brooding o'er his woe;
And his hand forbore to smite the ore,
And his furnace smouldered low.
But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
And a bright, courageous eye,

And bared his strong right arm for work,
While the quick flames mounted high.
And he sang: "Hurrah for my handicraft!"
As the red sparks lit the air;
"Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made," —
And he fashioned the first ploughshare.

And men, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands;
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And ploughed the willing lands;
And sang: "Hurrah for Tubal Cain!
Our staunch good friend is he;
And for the ploughshare and the plough
To him our praise shall be;
But while oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the plough,
We'll not forget the sword."

— *Charles Mackay.*

THE BUGLE SONG

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

– *Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

LEIF ERICSSON

Out through the black wolf's-mouth of massive cliffs one morning a swift longship sped, with the early wind rounding the great sail and helping the rowers with their oars. A line of shields hung along each side, helmeted heads gleamed here and there, and high in the stern the rising sun made a form shine like a statue of silver flame as he waved farewell to those on shore, who cheerily waved and shouted farewells back again. Ulf, the leader, still had a name to win; but what a glorious thing it was to stand there in the stern of that swift craft and feel it quiver with life beneath him in response to the rhythmic stroke of the oarsmen, as it surged through the heaving water. Brightly the sunlight leaped along the sea. Snow-white was the foam that flashed upwards underneath the curving prow, and now and then jettted high enough to come hissing inboard on the wind when the fitful gusts shifted to the rightabout. The men laughed, and carelessly shook the drops from their broad backs when it splashed among them.

What a hardy set of men they were, those Northmen of old! They had no compass; they must steer by the sun, or by the stars, guess at their rate of sailing, and tell by that how many more days distant was their destination. If the weather was fine, well. But if the sky clouded over, and sun nor star was seen for a week or more, while the wind veered at its own will, the chances were more than even that they would bring up on some coast where they had never been, with water and food to get, and perhaps every headland bristling with hostile spears. All this they knew, yet out to sea they went as happily as a fisherman seeks his nets. Trading, starving, fighting, plundering – it was all one to them. On the whole, they seemed to like fighting the best of all, since that is what their famous poems told most about.

One morning the dawn-light revealed a black spot on the low horizon. A speck that grew larger, with twinkling, fin-like flashes along each side, and in due time it proved to be a galley like their own bearing down straight for them. Nobody stopped to ask any questions. That was not sea-style then. But just as naturally as two men now in a lonely journey would shake hands on meeting, these two captains slipped their arms through their shield-handles, sheered alongside just beyond oar-tip, and exchanged cards in the shape of whistling javelins.

Up from their benches sprang the rowers. Twang! sang their war bows the song of the cord, and the air was full of hissing whispers of death as their shafts hurtled past. Round and round the two galleys circled in a strange dance, each steersman striving to bring his craft bows on, so as to ram and crush the other, while they lurched in the cross-seas, and rolled till they dipped in tons of water over the rail.

Up sprang the stranger on his prow; tall and broad-shouldered was he, with a torrent of ruddy hair floating in the wind. As Ulf turned to give an order to bale out the inrushing water, up rose a brawny arm, and a great spear flashed down from the high bow of the enemy and struck fairly between his shoulders. So sharp was the blow, so sudden, that Ulf pitched forward on one knee for just half a breath. But the spear fell clanging to the deck. The ruddy warrior stood looking at it with eyes of amazement. His own spear, that never before had failed! A flash of light leaped back like a lightning stroke; back to its master whistled the brand, for, ere he rose, Ulf snatched it up, and, as he rose, he hurled it – straight through the unguarded arm of the stranger.

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