

LOOKING BACKWARD.

He never thinks a man is truly great until he's dead,
And then he wipes away a tear and quotes what he has said.
He talks about the nations that long since have passed away,
And mourns when he compares them with the nations of to-day.

He talks about his boyhood and the fun that folks had then;
He talks about the actors that we ne'er shall see again.
He vows that everything worth while long since has gone before,
And life to him is just one grand, sweet funeral—nothing more.
—Washington Star.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

ROBERT MALCOLM had never been called "Bob" by any one until his recently acquired wife, with a coquettish pretense of shyness, had so addressed him.

He had known her but a short time when he won her. And now, at the end of six blissful months, he was sitting in his splendid library, perplexed and miserable, and gloomily eyeing the embers of a grate fire and trying to persuade himself that the shadow which threatened to wreck his future could be explained away if only he had the courage to ask her.

On coming home that afternoon he had gone to the sitting room and had found it empty. Turning to leave he saw a piece of note paper lying on the floor, as though it had been brushed off her desk as she rose in a hurry. In stooping to replace it, his eye caught two words, the beginning of a letter—"Dear Tom." Dear Tom! Could it be that there was a dear Tom in her life of whom he knew nothing? The letter read:

"Dear Tom—If I were to be asked why I am writing to you I should have to admit that I am yielding to an impulse. My whole life has been made up of impulses, and I never battled with them but once—alas, the very time I should have yielded. You know well what I mean, that night you renounced me, renounced me while your blood was on fire with love for me, which I knew and felt and revelled in. When your eyes dimly begged me to refuse to be renounced and your lips told me it would be better to part. Ah, if I had only yielded then to the impulse to tell you I loved you well enough to share your poverty and the task of caring for your poor, helpless father. How well I remember that dear, delightful, cruel summer in Dorking.

"You came, dear, and you stepped into my heart with that first smile on your brave, sunny face. Then, afterward, Aunt Sarah, when I told her of our betrothal, said in her icy, sneering tones: 'I congratulate you upon your discretion. It is a fitting thing that you should marry Tom Spencer and let your early poverty be merged into middle-aged and elderly poverty. As Tom Spencer's wife you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have before you such a life as your mother has led, only intensified, since your life will be encumbered by his help—ess, paralytic old father.'

"Tom, dear, do not utterly despise me when I tell you that her words had their weight. I did not fear the poverty, for I knew you were bound to succeed, if only, dear one, you were not hampered in your career by your father. I knew you were fond of him, and that while he lived you would keep him with you—that even I could not influence you to send him away. So when you told me we had better part I offered no protestation. I knew your heart was aching and that you needed comforting words from me. I knew I had only to speak one word to break down the barrier and have you take me to your heart forever. I did not speak that word. Though my heart cried out to you I could not tell you that I loved you well enough to share your burden. I did not speak that word. I am married now. My husband loves me, and I am rich beyond my fondest expectations. I have all those things which my luxurious and expensive tastes craved—yet I am not happy. This is indeed my farewell, dear one. You know now—every word in this letter has told you—what you are to me. You will not misunderstand—you will not come to me. It is over, Tom, and—"

Here the writing ended abruptly. Robert Malcolm was a loyal man, and though the evidence was against her he refused to believe his wife guilty of all that the letter implied. He told himself that if he dared to ask her for an explanation she would give it, and it would be satisfactory. To ask her to confess a dishonorable act was also to confess a lack of confidence in her.

While he was sitting there the door opened noiselessly. A slight girlish figure stole across the thick carpet and behind his chair. Two soft small hands were clasped before his eyes and a voice whispered:

"Guess who it is."

His heart gave a great bound and

he took the hands down and kissed them. Finally, as if satisfied with what he saw, he asked:

"Have you been shopping?" She seemed surprised at the trivial question following so closely upon the scrutiny she had undergone, and said:

"Is that all, Mr. Bluebeard? Gracious, how you scared me. I expected to hear you say in sepulchral tones, 'Woman, there is guilt on your face—where have you hidden the body?' And instead, after that soul-searching gaze, you ask the commonplace question in commonplace tones, 'Have you been shopping?'"

With a sigh of content and love and relief he threw his arms round her and drew her close to him for a moment. Then she seated herself opposite him in a low chair, where the firelight fell on her face, bringing out all its charm.

In the magnetism of her presence her husband became almost happy once more—until the memory of that letter came back to sting him.

Suddenly he asked her: "Adele, were you ever in Dorking?" She opened wide her eyes and answered:

"No, dear, why do you ask?" "Just curiosity." Then, after a pause, he added: "Did you ever know a man named Tom Spencer?"

She laughed softly and, folding her dainty hands, replied:

"Now am I indeed on the rack. Why torture my innocent soul with the curiosity to know the reason for placing me in the witness box?"

At her irrelevant answer his doubts rose again, and he rather sternly repeated his question, with a request for a direct reply.

"Tom Spencer—Tom Spencer—where have I seen or heard that name?" she queried softly, as if to herself. "I certainly don't know any Tom Spencer, but I believe I have heard the name somewhere."

"And now, you dear cross ogre, are there any more conundrums for me? Because, if you have finished, I will go and dress for dinner."

He laughed and watched her disappear through the door.

A month passed, and during this time Robert Malcolm tried to detect a flaw in his wife's devotion to justify him in the doubt which would creep in whenever he thought of that letter. But it was in vain that he sought an explanation in her manner. There was nothing about her to suggest that wealth had palled upon her, or that without poverty and Tom Spencer her life was a blank. She was as ever airily affectionate, daintily tyrannical, flippant and serious in one breath, with that "infinite variety" which was her greatest charm. One night when they had returned from a dance he decided to make a full confession to her and to ask her for an explanation. She had thrown herself into an easy chair and looked even fairer than usual.

Making a final effort he began, and rapidly he told her all—all about the letter, his doubts and despair and the unhappiness he felt whenever he thought of the matter. While he was talking she was looking down and twisting the rings on her slender fingers. When he finished she looked up at him with a slow, amused smile creeping over her face.

"Now I understand those questions you asked me about Tom Spencer. Yes, that was the name—and I know why the name seemed familiar to me."

"Well, what of Tom Spencer? Who is he?"

"He is a creature of my own imagination, and once having created Thomas I straightway forgot him. When you asked me that day I wondered where I had heard the name."

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Only this, Bob—but first you must promise not to laugh at me." She stopped, looking at him anxiously. He nodded impatiently, and she went on.

"Some time ago I conceived the idea of being literary. I thought out a story and decided that I would depart from the usual routine and have it told in a series of letters. You got hold of the beginning of the story. I was called away that day, and never thought again of my literary venture."

He drew her up to him and then, with his arms around her, he asked in a husky whisper:

"Adele, will you forgive me?" For answer she put her arms round his neck and then replied softly: "If you'll promise never to doubt me again."

The promise and the forgiveness were consummated in one long kiss.

A week later in a local paper Robert Malcolm happened on the following:

"Dorking, April 23.—Mr. William Spencer, an old and respected citizen of this city, died yesterday afternoon. The deceased had long been a sufferer from paralysis, but his death was unexpected. He leaves one son, Mr. Thomas Spencer, with whom he lived, to mourn his loss."—Waverley Magazine.

SCIENTIFIC BEET CULTURE.

A Department of Berlin Agricultural School Devoted to It.

A department of the agricultural high school at Berlin was recently established which is devoted entirely to the study of the scientific culture of beet sugar. Beet sugar cultivation on an industrial scale in Germany dates from but little more than fifty years ago, says a consular report, and toward the end of the '60s there was established in connection with the agricultural high school a small working laboratory which, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Scheibler, devoted its somewhat restricted facilities to the cause of scientific sugar production.

There were then in Germany about 180 more or less primitive sugar factories, which worked up annually 700,000 tons of beets. These had multiplied in 1900 to 300 factories, which consumed 13,200 tons of beets, or an average of more than 33,000 tons to each establishment. Meanwhile, the requirements of the time had far transcended the capacity and facilities of the institute founded by Prof. Scheibler, and the new spacious and completely equipped establishment now opened and dedicated to its work epitomizes firstly the present state of the sugar industry in Germany. It is recognized here above all that the abolition of export bounties by the Brussels conference ended definitely a long and important chapter in the history of beet-sugar production and that the industry, deprived of that form of artificial stimulus, must henceforth work out its own future upon new and independent lines. It is to be a battle in which scientific methods, profoundly studied and skillfully applied, alone can win. To concentrate all the light which science can give upon the task of producing most economically from a given area of land the largest weight of beets with the highest percentage of saccharine element, to harvest the crop, extract, cleanse and evaporate the juice, and to conduct each step of the process down to the marketing of the refined sugar with the utmost skill and avoidance of waste—this is the lesson which the new institute is designed and equipped to teach.

CARRIED OFF BY AN EAGLE.

Little Girl of 18 Months Killed by King of Birds.

While a little girl, about 18 months old, the only daughter of a young Sutherlandshire crofter, living about a mile from Inverness station, on the Highland railway, was playing at her father's cottage door one evening an eagle swooped down, gripped her in its claws and carried her off to the mountains, where, some hours later, her dead and mutilated body was found by a gamekeeper, says the London Express.

At first there was no clue to the mystery of her sudden disappearance. The little one had been playing in the sunshine while her mother was baking bread and her father was still at work in the fields.

Her baking finished, the mother prepared tea and called the child. As there was no response, she went out to look for her and not seeing her anywhere became alarmed and went in search of her husband.

Meanwhile a gamekeeper's party was hunting through the dense broom which covered a neighboring hill and while this investigation was in progress one of the gamekeepers, recalling stories of lambs being carried away by eagles, made his way toward the rocky crags near the crest of the hill. In a crevice in the rocks he saw a day shoe and in a deep cleft a little higher up he found the body of the missing child.

Two years ago an eagle attacked and killed a deer in Sutherlandshire and fed on its body until the keepers drove it off. Lambs are sometimes missed and their skeletons afterward found on the hilltops. It is fifty years, however, since such a tragedy as that related occurred.

When He Was Not Looking.

A modern instance of avoiding Scylla to dash upon Charybdis comes from the Washington Star, by the way of Uncle Eben.

"'Tain't good to be too sneaky," said the old man. "I once knowed a gemman dat got his mind so tore up 'bout germs an' bacillus dat he didn't look whah he were goin', an' got run ober by a truck."



Among the vegetable products peculiar to Madagascar is the fibrous substance known as raffia, which the natives weave on hand looms into a variety of fabrics, used for sacking, for draperies, and occasionally for dress goods. Under the name "rabanas," a striped and colored variety of this material is sold for curtains in the American market. Recently a new use has been found for raffia fiber in the manufacture of cigarette paper, and our consul at Tamatave, Mr. Hunt, suggests it might prove valuable for making other kinds of paper. The raffia plant has long been grown for ornamental purposes in European gardens.

Man has just learned how to flee from the malaria-bearing mosquito, and now, if he could, he would teach pear trees to avoid the blight-carrying honey bee. Experiments conducted in California, and recently reported to the Botanical Society of America, indicate that bees are active agents in the spread of pear blight at the period when the trees are in bloom. Pear trees protected with coverings, after the analogy of mosquito nets, which prevented bees from reaching their blossoms, were unaffected with blight, while other neighboring trees not thus protected were badly blighted. Other honey-seeking insects besides bees also carry infection.

Dr. Max Wolf, of Heidelberg, has photographed a remarkable nebula in the constellation Cygnus, which, on account of its shape, he calls the "America nebula." It is the first time that such an object has been named for any of the natural divisions of the earth. Dr. Wolf's photograph shows a really striking likeness to an outline map of North America. The softly glowing nebula represents the form of the continent surrounded by the dark background of the heavens as by an ocean. The narrowing toward the south, the huge gap of the Gulf of Mexico, and the graceful curve of the coast of Central America and the isthmus are to be seen.

Prof. Charles Baskerville, of the University of North Carolina, has discovered two new chemical elements, allied to thorium, from which the mantles of Weisbach burners are derived. He has named one of them carolinium, in honor of his State, and the other berzelium, after the name of the great Swiss chemist, Berzelius. Both the new elements are radio-active, giving off rays that penetrate metals, wood and other substances, and that are capable of producing photographic and visible light effects. Like other radio-active elements, they are of high atomic weight. Prof. Baskerville has been on the track of these new elements for several years.

A German experimenter describes a singular electric phenomenon exhibited by a glass tubeful of radium bromide. The substance had been sealed up in the tube in December, 1902. Six months later the experimenter was about to open the tube with a file, but as soon as the metal touched the glass the tube was pierced by a brilliant electric spark, accompanied by a sharp sound. It is thought that the retention in the tube of the positively charged Alpha particles, which cannot penetrate glass, and the continual escape of the negatively charged Beta particles, which do penetrate glass, set up a difference in the electric potential inside and outside the tube so great that at last a spark was able to pass through the glass wall.

QUEER BOATS OF THE ORIENT.

Picturesque Craft Used by Natives in the Far East.

To the eyes of the Westerner, unaccustomed to the wild, viking nature of the ocean that, icy cold, gnaws away at his coast, now and again tossing upon the beaches to bones of another of its victims, the gingerbread boats of the Far East seem queer indeed. One wonders how the dugouts, the shallow boats with their sails of matting, the unsymmetrical craft with low bows and grotesque overhanging sterns, can weather storms, says the Montreal Family Herald. And most wonderful of all is that wizard of the sea, the flying proa of Guam, which "blits over the swelling tide" with the speed of the flying Deutschland, and on which, it has been asserted, one may travel to an island ninety miles away, transact one's business and return while the hour hand circles once around the dial. An acquaintance with these boats convinces one that the law of the survival of the fittest holds true in this respect as in others.

The flying proa is aptly named. As one leans indolently over the rail of the steamer, dropping anchor in the Ladrone islands, glad once more to see land, one observes in the distance a triangular sail. It seems to be flying over the water. It quickly draws near, and is seen to be attached to a queer-looking craft about thirty feet long. The mast is set in the middle of the narrow hull, hardly more than two feet wide, and at each end is seated

a native, with paddle in hand. From one side protrude pieces of bamboo which support at their ends, eight or ten feet from the helling side of the boat and parallel to it, an outrigger. Its pointed end, flying along just above the water, now and again tops the crests of the waves, throwing up little jets of spray as it does so. Skimming along with the lightness and speed of an ice yacht, the two curious natives are soon far ahead of the anchored steamer. Then something odd happens. The craft falls away from the wind slightly, the sail is swung half way round, and this queer craft is coming back along its track. The bow has become stern, and he who sat there when the proa flew past is now the helmsman. With wind still abeam, the queer vessel sends past again on the other side of the steamer, revealing another oddity. This side of the hull is perpendicular and as flat as a board.

In Northern India, in the shadow of the unsurmountable Himalayas, a craft quite the opposite to the flying proa in speed and airy gracefulness is used. It must be slower even than the ancient basketlike coracle of the Welshman. It is an inflated bullock skin. The natives do not look exactly like Jolly Bacchuses as they paddle their way across the swift Sutlej river astride their uncouth craft. India has, perhaps, as great a variety of small craft as one could find in any country. Nearly every port has its peculiar type.

Some of the Indian boats have no masts at all. Such are the river houseboats in Northern India, which one may charter for \$20 or \$30 a month for a season, this sum paying for the services of a family of servants to do all the work, including moving the boat as often as desired. The servants live in the rear of the boat, while the remainder is occupied by those who are seeking relief from the fervid heat of the sun in this way. Many of the Malayan boats have overhanging galleries at both bow and stern for convenience of operation. Some have sails of matting, suggesting oriental banners as they hang from the masts.

The Asiatic watermen and their boats are inseparable, and in India, Siam and China thousands are born, live and die on them. In Hongkong harbor 20,000 live in boats, and in Canton the number has been estimated at 200,000. Their boats are arranged in blocks and lanes by the authorities. Sometimes one sees in a Chinese port a boat which is peculiar, not because of its appearance, but because of its use. This is the floating warehouse for the storage of the curse of the Chinese, opium.

Among the skillful watermen are the Hawaiians, who, like many of the other Polynesians, have a boat with an outrigger. The play of the Polynesian centers about his canoe, and there is said to be no sport in any country which surpasses the surf riding of the Hawaiians. In the Philippine islands may be seen a narrow boat with two outriggers, one on each side of the narrow hull.

TOOTHPICK HABIT.

So Prevalent in Chicago that It Affords a Clue to Character.

We have the drink habit, the card-playing habit, the tobacco habit—in fact, habits innumerable, but there is one habit of which little has been said, although it is present among us. It is the toothpick habit, and it is as firmly rooted in those who have it as any of the more objectionable ones.

Observe a man coming down State street early in the morning. He has one of the little bits of wood in his mouth. Now, here is where a little character reading comes in. If he has a quick, high-strung, nervous temperament, in a few minutes' time he will have chewed up one end of it and turned the other end in his mouth to masticate. This end is also soon reduced to pulp and a fresh toothpick takes its place. He reaches his place of business or employment, but the toothpick still sticks there, nor does he have his mouth free of one until his stock is entirely exhausted or he is tired out. In the former case a match is resorted to or a few toothpicks borrowed from a neighbor, which he will repay when he obtains a fresh stock at the restaurant where he eats his luncheon.

Cool, phlegmatic persons will keep a toothpick in their mouths for several hours. A man of moody or troubled mind will let his toothpick droop listlessly downward; a man with his mind intent on one thing will close his teeth on it and it will stick out straight, while a happy-go-lucky person, or one with mind free from care, will have his toothpick at an upward angle, or constantly shifting about in the mouth. I tell you, that habit is a great index to a man's thoughts and characteristics.

The cashier of a leading cafe, whose desk is right where the box of toothpicks is, says the habit is growing to such an extent as to keep them busy filling the box anew. "And worst of all," she remarked, "they seem unable to break themselves of the habit. After gazing furtively around, a man will grab up a handful of toothpicks and hastily thrust them in his vest pocket with a guilty look."—Chicago Journal