

100 LATE.

She lies so still the living day,
She doth not move or speak;
The roses long have died away
Upon her dainty cheek.

I spoke her harshly yesternorn—
Her agonized sobs,
It haunts me now—and for my scorn
The twilight in her eyes!

And now each bitter word I said
Acceptation my pain—
Each taunt I leveled at the dead
Has burnt into my brain.

Who is the wiser? I, whose feet
Must tread an earthy hell?
Or she who hears that welcome sweet,
"Fair spirit, all is well!"

Though God forgive me in his grace,
When I have "crossed the bar,"
When I shall meet her face to face
Beyond the morning star.

I dare not think that even there,
Within the gates of gold,
My soul will show to her as fair
As in the days of old.

The dear dead days of long ago,
Whose tale was told above,
When in our hearts we felt the glow,
The rosy dawn of love!"

—Public Opinion.

A HUMORIST.

There was a somnolent influence in the air of that old library. The light from without was dulled by the dusty window panes, and when the double doors swung shut the heavy humming of city life seemed to recede. The librarian, pretty, plump and middle-aged, placidly crocheted and read an evening paper. A bunch of violets on the low desk before her diffused a faint odor, and a small clock kept up a feeble tick-take, as if conscious that time was a topic scarcely worth mentioning there.

It was a spacious room, furnished with many bookcases, and in the center a large round table strewn with periodicals. Here and there on pedestals were aged-grimed busts in plaster of Paris, of Cicero, Livy, Aristotle, and other classic molders of thought. These ancients had the place pretty much to themselves. It was a day in late autumn, but mild, as late autumn days in New Orleans are likely to be. A window was open, and although my eyes and mind were fixed upon the page before me I heard in a sub-conscious sort of way, a fig tree scratching itself against the wall and the squabbling twitter of some sparrows. My thoughts were brought to a sudden standstill by the fall of a heavy book almost at my feet, and a quavering voice said: "Excuse me; I ask a thousand pardons."

The apologist was an old man with a face wonderfully seamed and wrinkled. He had a sunken mouth, a silvery stubble on his chin, and cottony white hair like the virtuous grandfathers on the stage; but there was a bright blue gleam in his eyes beneath their shaggy eyebrows.

With a depreciating, toothless smile he tiptoed away over the polished floor, as if dreading the noise a down-right footstep would make in that vast echoing room rubbing his withered hands nervously together and shaking his head with a palsied motion.

After that I often noticed him in the library. He would sit at the table reading for hours, and scribbling in a small notebook with a tremulous hand, that seemed scarcely capable of forming the characters. Frequently I saw him glancing through the humorous periodicals; but his unsmiling gravity, meanwhile did not suggest appreciation.

Moved by curiosity, I questioned the librarian about him.

"That old gentleman?" she said, with the smile that was always ready to appear upon her pleasant face, "his name is Middlewick, Joshua Middlewick. He's a regular visitor—quite a feature of the place."

"Then you know nothing about him outside of the library?"

"Oh, no! I don't know anything at all about him, except what he told me himself one day. It happened he caught his coat pocket on a chair—the cloth was so thin that I don't see how it held together—and tore it; so I offered to mend it for the poor old gentleman. While I was at work he told me his name, and that he is a writer—a contributor to"—here she mentioned several well known humorous weeklies published in New York.

"I know it is really so, for he brought me a paper and showed me his initials at the end of one of the pieces."

"I should think his jests would be rather archaic," I said.

"Well, I can't say. I don't care much for that kind of reading. But the old gentleman is a great scholar, too," she added. "It's as easy for him to read Greek and Latin as it is for me to read this paper. The books he reads are mostly from that case near the door—old old books they are, you see. I suppose he likes them because he's so old himself."

After a few more remarks I moved away. I think the librarian was reluctant to part with me. There were so many hours that she had to keep company with silence.

A professional humorist! I could scarcely fancy the old man, with his tottering walk and threadbare, well-brushed clothes in that character. The thought occurred to me that an impulse of senile vanity might have moved him to take advantage of a similarity of initials in order to dazzle the librarian with the idea that he was a literary success. He had the forlorn, half-bewildered look of aged poverty that finds itself still obliged to keep up the struggle for a living. The vocation of a humorist seemed to hang upon him as incongruously as a cheap, ready-made coat upon the shoulders of a skeleton. But perhaps he was merely one of those who drain their private lives of mirth to supply the public demand, sad through the perpetual necessity of being funny.

When I looked up some of the quips signed "J. M." it was a surprise to find them not only sprightly, but thoroughly modern in tone. I felt an increase of respect for the old man.

One afternoon I took advantage of my position as a privileged visitor to the library to rummage among Mr. Middlewick's favorite works. Queer old books they were—some of them exceedingly rare, and all with bindings much the worse for years. The leaves were sallow with age and exhaled a musty odor; and as I opened volume after volume, and scanned page after page, a revelation broke upon me. I had found the source of Mr. Middlewick's wit. The hoary rogue dug up his jests out of antiquity and meanwhile studied the comic papers to catch the contemporaneous tone. As I am no professional unmasker of villains, and the old man's trickeries had injured me in no wise, I could afford to admire his industry and the ingenuity with which he managed to give a modern twist to humor almost prehistoric. He was no common plagiarist. He "conveyed" with genius, and knew how to furnish up his stolen goods so that they were not recognizable to the general public as another man's property.

"Well, well!" I mused—"no doubt the poor old fellow needs money badly enough—and if to select well among old things is almost equal to inventing new ones, he's not so far in the wrong."

It struck me that Mr. Middlewick was an old gentleman who would bear watching.

Not long after my discovery I chanced to leave the library just as he was going down the long stone stairway which led to the street; and I could not resist the temptation to follow him. It was a bleak damp day, with a querulous wind that whined around the street corners and plucked at the leafless branches of the tall trees in the square.

I noticed how lankly the old man's threadbare overcoat flapped about his shrunken form. There was no great difficulty in keeping pace with one whose gait was so slow and feeble. On and on he went, down Canal street, across to Canal to Royal, till at last he turned into a narrow street of the French quarter.

It was a street of poor people. The pavement was littered with scraps of paper and oyster shells, and a tattered child was angling for craw-fish in the turbid gutter. A man and woman exchanged choice oaths in Italian from opposite windows. From one of the dwellings could be heard the regular cadence of rockers on an uncarpeted floor, while a husky voice sang:

"Dodo Ninette—
Trois picaillons tu fait
Pou' bébé qui va faire dodo
Pou' sa mère chérie."

Mr. Middlewick entered a small, one-story house with batten shutters and a roof of Spanish tiles. The door sill had almost rotted away, and the panes were cracked and broken, the lower half of the window being curtained with dingy calico. The room within, with its discolored walls and scanty furniture, had the cheerless, unhomelike look of a place where no womanly influence is at work.

Upon the bare boards sat a child playing contentedly with a headless wooden horse and the handle of a hearthbrush.

He jumped up when the old man came in.

"Grampa's got some pretty pictures for you, Jimmy," said Mr. Middlewick, giving the child some colored advertising cards. "I shouldn't wonder, either," he added, with a feeble chuckle. "If there'd be a nice present for a good boy's birthday."

"An' I'm a good boy, grampa," said Jimmy, earnestly, looking up with eyes that were two blue flowers.

"That you are—that you are, Jimmy!" cried the professional humorist, hugging his grandson close in his withered arms.—J. K. Wetherell, in New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Miles of Different Nations.

The Irish mile is 2,240 yards.
The Swiss mile is 9,156 yards.
The Italian mile is 1,766 yards.
The Scotch mile is 1,984 yards.
The German mile is 8,106 yards.
The Arabian mile is 2,143 yards.
The Turkish mile is 1,826 yards.
The Flemish mile is 6,896 yards.
The Vienna post mile is 8,296 yards.
The West mile is 1,168 or 1,337 yards.
The Roman mile is 1,628 or 2,502 yards.
The Dutch and Prussian mile is 6,480 yards.
The Swedish and Danish mile is 7,315.5 yards.
The English and American mile is 1,706 yards.—Fact.

The Red Color.

We find from old medical prescriptions that our ancestors considered that there was "much virtue in your" red. A Saxon apothecary ordered for headache the herb crosswort, put on a red fillet, and bound around the head. For the healing of a lunatic, you are recommended to "take cloverwart, and wreath it with a red thread about the man's swere (neck) when the moon is on the wane, in the month which is called April. Soon he will be healed."

Birthplace of Schiller.

The mothers of Schiller and Kepler have received memorials in Leonberg, the native town of both. The town council of the "Town of Mothers," as it proudly calls itself, has affixed tablets to the walls of the old castle of Duke Ulrich, the well-beloved, where the magna charta of Wurtemberg liberties was signed by the duke, in honor of the poet and the astronomer.

A Saxon Invention.

Mince pie is emphatically a New England institution, but it is a Saxon invention. Before their conversion to christianity they used to make a stew or porridge consisting of everything held sacred to their gods, as the flesh of birds, animals, grains and dried herbs which had been gathered at the full of the moon.

TO AGENTS.

Homeseekers' excursions, 1892, on August 30 and September 17th, a rate of one lowest first class fair will be made from eastern points to points on our line for two homeseekers' excursions. These tickets will be sold at all the principal railway points as far east as Buffalo and Pittsburg. Tickets will be good within twenty days from the date of sale and stop overs will be allowed after passing the Missouri river. It is expected that there will be quite a large immigration of intending settlers to Nebraska, northwestern Kansas and eastern Colorado, during this summer and fall. This immigration can be very largely increased by judicious advertising and work by the various communities tributary to our line. It is therefor suggested that sections proposing to prepare such advertising matter for distribution in the east in regard to the inducements they have to offer the farmer, the business man and investor, should begin to get their advertising in shape at an early date as possible. In case their plans contemplate sending a good advertising man to distribute their matter and attend to their advertising generally, this department may be able to give valuable pointers as to the best method of doing the work.

I think it is desirable that editors of the papers along our line should begin agitating the matter in order that the people may be prompted to do more or less individual work with their friends in the east in the way of sending by mail such matter as the different counties or districts may prepare in pamphlet form or in the shape of extra editions of their home newspapers giving full information as to the resources and advantages, and directing attention to the very low rates that will be made to enable them to come and see for themselves that the representations are not really up to the reality.

The company has recently issued a pamphlet in regard to the agricultural resources of Nebraska, which will be furnished free to those who may desire to mail it to their friends in the east. This pamphlet treats of Nebraska, northwestern Kansas and eastern Colorado. I wish you would present this matter to editors at your place and also to other parties who may be interested in settling up vacant farm lands of this state.

J. FRANCIS, G. P. and T. A.,
Omaha, Nebraska.

EFFECTS OF HEAT.

The expense as well as the impossibility of leaving one's business makes it entirely out of the question for many people to take a vacation, however bad they may need it. In all cases, where one can afford it, a vacation is probably preferable to tonics; but for the tens of thousands who can take no rest the brain and nerve tonic of modern medical science is an indispensable safeguard.

Nothing that is known to the medical profession to-day is the equal of Peruna in the cure or prevention of all derangements due to hot weather. Peruna gives new vigor to the brain, strength and quiet to the weakened nerves, and as nearly supplies the need of a vacation to the overworked man or woman as it is possible for any remedy to do. Peruna is a reliable specific for nervous prostration, nerve exhaustion, sleeplessness, and chronic malaria.

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Castoria.

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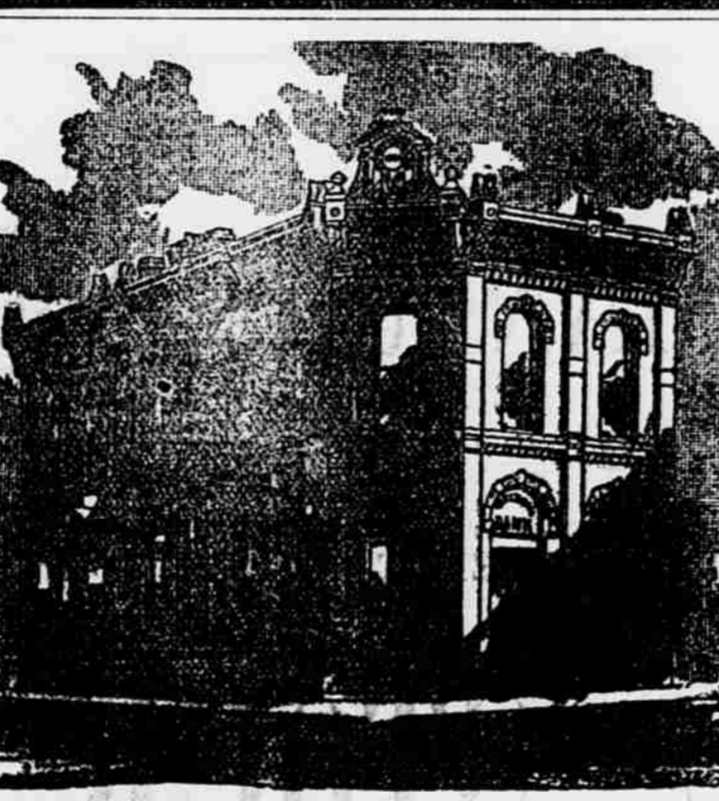
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