

THE PRICELESS THOUGHT.

A penny for my thoughts? I'll tell you this: To me that thought is worth the whole of bliss.

—John Kendrick Bangs, in Ainslee's Magazine.

A Skating Episode

Years ago, when I was a student at Heidelberg, it was my custom to travel up a branch of the Neckar every week-end to an old castle where dwelt the Baron von Rosenzweig with his daughter Elsa.

It was in the early part of the year, and the river was well frozen. Knowing that I could travel nearly the whole of the distance on the ice, I donned my skates and set out.

As I hastened on I could see the lights of the castle twinkling in the distance. They shone in the night like stars to guide my feet to her I loved.



IT WAS A MELANCHOLY PLEASURE.

now, and would reach the meeting place before me.

There had been some talk of robbers in the neighborhood recently, and for this reason I carried not a revolver, but a stick in which was concealed a rapier, thinking this was good enough for them.

I was nearing a bend in the river when a cry reached my ears. Could it be the howl of a wolf? It was repeated. It sounded more human.

Again the cry was repeated, and I now knew it for that of a woman—and, what was more, it was a cry of distress.

I shouted. The man turned his head and saw my swift approach. Then, quick as thought, his knife flashed twice, and there was a sharp pang from the woman as she sank to the ground.

All this was a matter of seconds. As it was now impossible to catch the robber, or whatever he was, I hurried to the prostrate form upon the ice.

Quickly I pressed my brandy flask to her lips. She stirred, and her eyes looked up into mine.

am dying. Let me die in your arms! And—and tell me your love!

Then, placing her arms around my neck, I raised her up and told her what no other ear shall hear, no other eye shall read.

My student days were over. After a long search for the murderer of my love, I had been denied even the consolation of vengeance.

It was a bleak winter day, and January's frost brought the vigorous youth of London out on to the skating ponds. Beneath a gray and frosty sky I made my way with my skates to the ornamental water in Regent's Park.

The ring of the skates called the sad scene up to me vividly. I could see the banks of the frozen river and the broad moonlit space where Elsa had met her death.

words ringing in my ears, and see the last look in her eyes upturned to mine.

Mingling among the throng I strove to drive away these memories. Then as I skated on I caught sight of a crowd gathered round a man who was cutting figures upon the ice.

I drew near to watch, and soon saw that he was no ordinary skater. He displayed a dexterity and a finish that are seldom seen.

"Bravo! Bravo!" went up from the crowd, for it was a wonderful feat. Those around me ejaculated expressions of astonishment, for it was indeed a trick that they had never witnessed before.

"You're a quick skater," I said. "Now I will give you a start round this ring, and if you can prevent me from catching you I'll admit you're the smartest man I've ever seen on the ice."

"Very well," he replied, with a foreign accent; "try it. And if you can catch me you're cleverer than I."

With the words, he started off and I followed. Round and round the ring we went like lightning, the spectators cheering us on. I gained on him and was stretching out my hand to catch him when he leaped right across my path, and with a stumbling backward movement, left me on the other side of the ring.

The onlookers cheered him, and I returned to the charge again. This time, when I was close on him, he did the same thing; but I was after him like a shot, and pressing him close in the middle of the ring. But he was not to be caught.

"I give it up, too," he said. "I've had enough." And with that he sought the bank, and sitting down on a chair, called for his skates to be removed.

"Murder!" he said, with growing excitement. "Are you sure of it?"

"Yes," I replied. "Do you happen to remember the case of Elsa von Rosenzweig, killed on the ice at Heidelberg, three years ago?"

"I've heard of it," he replied. "They never found the man. You don't mean to say that—"

"I do," I said. "You come and stand nearby while I talk to him; and take your cue from me."

With this I approached the foreigner, and the policeman established himself nearby.

"That's an extraordinary figure of yours," I said.

"Yes," he replied. "I think I may claim a—what you call—a monopoly of that. You see, no one else can do it."

"Are you sure?" I asked, pointedly.

"I fancy I've seen it somewhere," he looked incredulous.

"I'll wager you a hundred golden sovereigns you can't show me another man who can do it," he said. "Where did you see it?"

"On a branch of the Neckar," I replied. "Leading up to the Castle Rosenzweig."

The man's jaw fell, and he blanched suddenly as I went on: "Of course, it was you. I tried to overtake you, but you—"

"Me!" he ejaculated, recovering himself. "What proof have you of that?"

"The trick you performed on the ice just now to elude me was the same that you employed on that occasion."

"That is nonsense!" he cried, starting up and glaring at me. "Do you suppose that I'm the only one in the world that can do it?"

"You said just now that no one else could do it," I replied. "You're the man without a doubt."

"Absurd! Ridiculous!" he cried again, while I caught the policeman's eye. "This is too much. You are romancing. I tell you—"

"Listen to me," I said, interrupting him. "Do you know me?"

"No; I never set eyes on you before."

"Good. That lends additional weight to what I have to say. It is this. While I was chasing you I managed to run my rapier through the calf of your leg before you tricked me. I presume the mark is still there?"

He laughed uneasily.

"Ach! Gott!" he said. "You English are too much. To accuse a man of murder because he can cut a certain figure on the ice, and because you think he has a little mark on the calf of his leg—ach! That's good!" And he laughed again.

But his amusement was short-lived. "Murder!" said I. "Who accused you of murder? I never said a word about murder."

"Not to him," said the policeman, now stepping forward, "but you did to me a little while back. Will you charge this man?" he went on, addressing me. "He seems to know exactly what the charge is."

"Yes," I returned. "I charge him with the murder of Elsa von Rosenzweig, three years ago, on the Neckar."

There was a sensation among the spectators as the man, pale as death, looked this way and that as if for some loophole of escape. But with the policeman's heavy hand upon him, there was small chance, and he was led away like one in a dream, self-convicted of his own words.

Subsequent investigation proved him to be the right man, for there was the small mark of the rapier wound visible upon the calf of his leg. The whole matter was cleared up and his identity was proved beyond a doubt.

Posters are more employed than ever before. Although Paris boasts of two glowing billboards, almost every blank wall space is covered with little slips advertising houses to rent, furniture to sell or help wanted.

Political and mass meetings are also announced in this way; in fact, it is the usual form of advertising. The recent strikes were made public by means of posters, and at regular intervals the women's rights members go about pasting slips.

Sandwich men are extensively employed, especially by the music halls. On the Boulevard St. Michael an old man walks with half-closed eyes, carrying a sign which reads in big letters: "Do Not Look Behind." Needless to say, every one hastens to do so.

The custom of distributing reclaims in the street, although seen here, is by no means as general as in France. There it is a common advertising medium.

Any business, from dressmaking and dry goods to schools and libraries, is recommended. This is, indeed, a regular business, and the distributors, men and women, must have a license.

The theater is an advertising medium for dressmakers and milliners. It is a well-known fact that the principal Parisian actresses never pay for their dresses; these are furnished by the big establishments free of charge, provided their names figure on the program.

Her hats beg description. "And that's not all they beggar for! Her husband tells the truth."—Houston Post.

There are two Esperanto clubs in Moscow, and over a thousand persons are busy studying the language. A book store will shortly be opened, in which only books printed in Esperanto will be sold.

Good Short Stories

Gaston burst like a whirlwind in upon his friend Alphonse. "Will you be my witness?" he cried. "Going to fight?" "No; going to get married."

Alphonse after a pause inquired, "Can't you apologize?"

It was an awfully old joke, but the American thought it might cause his English friend to generate a smile.

"Just before I sailed for Liverpool," said the American, "I dreamed that I was dead, and the heat woke me up."

"So?" rejoined the Englishman, seriously. "The weather must be beastly hot in America."

Dr. Walter C. Smith, the popular Scotch poet-preacher, on one occasion tried to explain to an old lady the meaning of the scriptural expression, "Take up thy bed and walk," by saying that the bed was simply a mat or rug easily taken up and carried away.

"No, no," replied the lady. "I canna believe that. The bed was a regular four-poster. There would be no miracle in walking away w' a bit o' mat or rug on your back."

Rube Waddell, the baseball star, at a banquet in his honor in St. Louis, said of pitching: "The secret of winning pitching is trickery. I once knew a Nictown drummer named Horton who would have made a fine pitcher. I found Horton one day writing in a red book."

"A diary?" said I. "I didn't know you kept a diary, Horton." "It is only a fake one," he replied. "I make out in it that I lead the life of a saint. Then I leave it lying around for my wife to read."

An old lady was accosted in a London street by a well-dressed and refined-looking stranger, who effusively claimed her as a friend.

"I really don't believe you remember me!" she exclaimed, reproachfully, and the old lady, never doubting that her memory was at fault, confessed that she could not quite recall the name.

"Ah! but I have changed it since you knew me," said her interlocutor, gayly, and after a few more lively speeches she passed on, having possessed herself meanwhile of the old lady's purse.

When Charles Dudley Warner was the editor of the Hartford, Connecticut, Press, back in the sixties, arousing the patriotism of the State by his vigorous appeals, one of the type-setters came in from the composing room, and planting himself before the editor, said: "Well, Mr. Warner, I've decided to enlist in the army."

With mingled sensations of pride and responsibility, Mr. Warner replied encouragingly that he was glad to see that the man felt the call of duty.

"Oh, it isn't that," said the truthful compositor; "but I'd rather be shot than try to set any more of your copy."

One of Lord Carmarthen's future constituents once asked the youthful candidate his opinion upon some abstract question of which he knew nothing.

"Let him alone!" cried another, derisively; "don't you see he's nothing but a baby?" "What do you think?" retorted his inquirer, heedless of the interruption and determined to have an answer.

"I think," said Lord Carmarthen, with ready wit, "that it is high time for all babies to be in bed"; and so saying he gathered up his papers and disappeared from the platform.

Again—and this last anecdote is so well known as to have become well-nigh historical—at a crowded meeting just before his election, he was interrupted by the question: "Does your mother know you're out?" "Yes, she does," was the instant retort, "and y Tuesday night she will know I'm in."

His prophecy proved correct and he headed the poll by a large majority.

EFFECT OF AN AWFUL EXAMPLE.

It Brought Home to Eleanor Her Lack of Accomplishments. "Well, John, what am I going to do with Eleanor? I can't make her take any interest in practical things," said Mrs. Parks.

"You must remember, my dear, that Eleanor is young yet; she's more interested in having a good time."

"Of course I want her to have a good time, but she ought to know how to do a few things besides play tennis and basket-ball. Why, when I was seventeen I could sew well and was a good cook."

"But you are a remarkable woman, you know," said Mr. Parks, with a twinkling eye, "and you doubtless began by being a remarkable girl."

"Now, John, don't be foolish," answered Mrs. Parks, blushing with pleasure. "I was't remarkable at all, and really I've tried so hard with Eleanor, I got up a luncheon club, to try and inspire her to learn cooking. Each girl was to prepare two dishes; but, dear me! Eleanor always had an impatient engagement, and at the last moment the cook and I prepared them."

"Then I told her she might have another man's dress, which she wanted, if she'd make it herself, with my help. She talks about it, but never gets at it. What a time she'd have if she were married!"

"Oh, don't worry about it, Martha. Something will happen perhaps to direct her interest to home things. But she won't be marrying yet a while."

"Well, I don't know, John. Midge Richards was only nineteen—"

"At this moment Eleanor burst in, pretty as a picture, her hair a little wild and her face flushed from the game of tennis."

"Mother," she exclaimed, "have you heard what's happened? Why, I think it's perfectly awful! Midge Richards has come home! I mean she's been brought home. Her husband brought her. She said she hadn't enough money yet to supply the necessary servants to take care of her, and he'd brought her back because she couldn't do anything. Isn't that awful?"

"Yes, I think it is pretty awful," answered Mrs. Parks, not daring to look at her husband, "but if she loves him she can begin and learn now."

"Oh, John, isn't it funny to see it work?" exclaimed Mrs. Parks the next

night. "Though it's anything but funny for those two poor youngsters," she added. "I've been chuckling all day. This morning Eleanor asked me if I could help her with that dress, and though I had planned to do other things, I said yes, and she worked like a Trojan all the morning. Then at luncheon she said she thought she'd surprise the girls of the old luncheon club by learning to prepare a whole meal, and then invite them to eat it. I told her she might, and to-morrow morning she's going to learn to cream potatoes and make mayonnaise dressing. Poor Midge's return has had more effect than all my planning and trying."

To which Mr. Parks replied, "Oh, I told you not to worry. Eleanor's all right."—Youth's Companion.

A DANGEROUS STOWAWAY.

Almost every ship which gets into port has an experience to relate of stolen passages. Perhaps the most curious case of a stowaway is told in a recent number of the New York Times. The adventure took place on the big British freighter Matoppe, which reached its berth a short time ago at a South Brooklyn dock.

In February the Matoppe sailed from Calcutta with a load of rails for the Trans-Siberian railway. It unloaded at Dalny and on its return trip, on the third night out its strange stowaway was discovered.

A number of chickens, kept in a coop on the poop-deck, were found slaughtered one morning. The next night a sheep was killed, and its half-eaten carcass left near the machinery room.

A watch was then kept, and it was found that a Manchurian tiger was on board the ship. The creature had stolen on board at Dalny, secreted itself and driven on deck by hunger had committed the depredations which had set the crew to wondering.

In spite of a strict lookout no near view of the cat could be obtained. At daylight search failed to reveal its hiding place. Once or twice the crew caught sight of two green eyes glaring out of the darkness, but they vanished before a gun could be brought to shoulder.

The thefts went on. Then, one night, a Chinese fireman, crossing the deck, was badly scared by the sudden appearance of the animal. The captain decided that something must be done. Another hunt was organized. The first, second and third officers were armed and the crew provided with clubs to beat up the game. It was night when the creature was finally discovered behind some odds and ends in the space under the poop-deck.

The second officer was the first to see the big cat. Two blazing eyes were turned in his direction and the officer fired. There was a cry from the animal, and then the little body was launched full at its would-be slayer.

The officer fired again, and then, as he half turned to avoid the springing animal, it struck him full on the shoulder. The cat's sharp claws cut his coat from the collar down. Then the beast bounded through the door leading to the deck.

At that spot coal had been piled up to the rail. The men who had run aft at the sound of the shot saw the animal bound up this pile and leap far out into the sea.

"It was very interesting," said the second officer, "but we were all disappointed because we lost the skin."

OLD SLEUTH UP TO DATE.

There Are More Ways than One of Folling the Villain.

Right at the mouth of the tunnel our hero lay, tightly bound across the track, says Judge. A few yards up the hillside was his sweetheart, lashed to a tree. Near by stood the villain Tarbox, arms folded, a diabolical grin on his face, as he invited the helpless girl to see the destruction of her lover.

What could save him? Already there echoed from the tunnel the roar of the express train as it thundered down the mountain slope toward its victim.

"Keep up your courage, dear," said the doomed man calmly. "Providence will yet provide an escape from that scoundrel's toils, never fear."

"Let's see," murmured the great author abstractedly, as he paused a moment in his dictation. "How's she going to get him out of that fix? She can't rush wildly into the tunnel and flag the train with a sulphurous match, because she's tied. She can't influence the villain, because his is a heart of stone. The engineer couldn't hear her piercing shriek, because the train is in a tunnel. Her faithful bound couldn't untie him. She— Oh, I have it! Of course," and he resumed his dictation.

Just as the headlight of the approaching train twinkled into view far up the subterranean passage, a sudden, fierce gust of wind blew down the mountain, struck our heroine's hat, which had been leaning against a tree and trundled it across the open space into the cavernous mouth of the tunnel.

A moment later was heard a long, harsh, grating screech, and the locomotive, its wheels tangled and locked in the mainmast ruins of the hat, came to a standstill with its cow-catcher just touching our hero's hair. Men descended from the cab and released him and the girl, while the wretch Tarbox dashed away into the night, shaking his clenched fists in bitter anger at the sky.

"Thank God," gasped our heroine wildly as she sunk fainting into her lover's arms. "Thank God that I wore my Merry Widow instead of the usual wild rose!"

Obliging, Yet Grateful.

"It is very kind of you," said the lady to her stout husband, as he knelt before her to put on her overshoes.

"Don't mention it, my dear," he replied. "Nevertheless, I am glad you are not a centipede."—Judge.

Her Way.

"I wouldn't cry like that if I were you," said a lady to little Alice.

"Well," said Alice between her sobs, "you can cry any way you like, but this is my way."—United Presbyterian.

NATALIE'S BRACELETS.

She Liked Boys Who Would Spend Money Upon Her.

Natalie Joyce held a pretty bracelet arm before Pen Darrington. "See what it is to have a birthday!" she cried, gaily.

"Three! Natalie Joyce, aren't you the luckiest? And isn't that one with the pearls a beauty?" Pen's voice sounded as happy as if the pretty things were her own—it was a way Pen had.

Natalie twisted the one with the pearls thoughtfully. "It is lovely," she said, "only I kind of hated to have Dick Marshall spend so much for it."

"Dick Marshall!" Pen repeated.

Natalie dimpled. "And the others are from Ralph Dixon and Brent Lyon. Wasn't it funny they should all have had the same idea? What is the matter with you, Pen Darrington? You look as solemn as an owl."

"I wish you—hadn't let them," Pen said, bravely.

Natalie stripped the bracelets off and thrust them in her pocket.

"I might have remembered what a Puritan you are!" she said, angrily. "You needn't have said a word—It's enough to stand there looking a hundred things, each worse than the last."

"I'm sorry," Pen faltered.

"It looks like it!" Natalie retorted, marching off. At the corner, however, her anger fell away and her dimples came back, for she saw Rob Darrington coming, and in the secret place in her heart where she kept her dreams—still sweet and innocent girl-dreams, in spite of her vanity—Rob Darrington moved as hero. The two went on together, laughing and talking, both well content. But that evening Rob came to his sister's room.

"I want to ask you something, Pen," he said.

"All right," Pen responded. She was very proud of her big brother.

"It's about Natalie Joyce," Rob said, seriously. "Pen, is it true that she accepts presents—valuable ones—from any fellow who gives them to her? Fellows like Ralph Dixon, for instance?"

Pen shook her head. "No fair, Rob," she said, quietly.

"I supposed you'd say that," Rob returned. "I heard the fellows talking about it, and I wouldn't believe it. He strode across to the window and stood looking out, whistling softly, a long time.

Natalie wondered why Rob Darrington stopped coming to see her. Then she decided that it was not worth worrying about. She never would have cared for him, anyway; he was too proper. She liked boys who were good fun and gave you things. She had six bracelets now.—Youth's Companion.

NEW POINT OF VIEW.

Clever Suggestion of a Woman to Aid Erring Youth.

"I had to dismiss that office boy of mine, Mary—you recall him, don't you?" said Mr. Clark to his wife one evening, according to the Youth's Companion. "He stole. We weren't sure of it at first, but one day we found out certainly. There were a lot of printed and stamped envelopes that we kept stored in an unused closet, intending to have them redeemed some time. Ted got ahead of us, though. He wrote a letter on a typewriter, using the office-stationery. It was addressed to the postmaster, and requested him to give to Theodore—the money for the envelopes he was returning."

"Did he sign it?" asked the wife.

"Yes, he did that, too; and it was the illiterate handwriting that gave him away. The postal clerk telephoned to see if it was all right—there was about \$20 involved—and so we caught him."

"What did you do then?"

"We gave the boy a long lecture—frightened him with the reform school, and so on—and then fired him."

"Was that all?" asked the wife.

"Why, yes. We couldn't keep him, of course. He is not fit to do any trustworthy work. We cannot afford to risk it."

"It seems to me," said the woman, "that you are running a bigger risk in turning him loose this way. If no one knows his weakness he will be more easily tempted again, and his future employers, not understanding with whom they are dealing, may suffer badly from his thefts."

"Well, what would you do?"

"Keep him. Watch him without letting him know it. He is only a child if he does not realize that every bad thing he does will be discovered sooner or later. Some one should teach him. Don't you think you ought to? It was in your employment that he came to grief."

"I hadn't thought of it in that way, but I don't know but what you are right, Mary," said her husband. "I will take him back and give him another show."

Falling in Love.

I do not doubt as the world goes on a deeper sense of moral responsibility in the matter of marriage will grow up among us. But it will not take the false direction of ignoring these our profoundest and holiest instincts. Marriage for money may go, marriage for rank may go, marriage for position may go, but marriage for love, I believe and trust, will last forever. Men in the future will probably feel that a union with their cousins or near relations is positively wicked; that a union with those too like them in person or disposition is at least undesirable; that a union based upon considerations of wealth or any other consideration save considerations of immediate natural impulse is base and disgraceful. But to the end of time will continue to feel in spite of doctrinaires that the voice of nature is better far than the voice of the lord chancellor or the royal society and that the instinctive desire for a particular helpmate is a surer guide for the ultimate happiness both of the race and of the individual than any amount of deliberate consultation. It is not the foolish fancies of youth that will have to be got rid of, but the foolish, wicked and mischievous interference of parents or outsiders.—Grant Allen.

A STRUGGLE THAT PAID.

It took Max Greiber four years to become the prosperous and respected proprietor of a restaurant, after having been a loafer and a bum.

His wife had died, his children were with his grandparents and he himself had been twice in the hospital before he got to drifting. A useless, objectless, pitiful life it was that he led for a while. He "didn't seem to succeed," somehow, when he was at last on his feet again and his own master, he told the story to an acquaintance as follows:

I was a full-fledged hobo, I tell you! Slept out nights, and drank every time I got a nickel. Many's the time the cog has come along and warmed the soles of my feet to wake me up and keep me from freezing stiff in some alleyway or hall. But I got a jounce one day that made me see things differently. It was this way:

I used to be good looking—I mean clean and well dressed. I took pride in being smart. Why, when my wife was alive, I wouldn't start to work in the morning with my dinner bucket till my hair was parted just so—that's the truth!

Well, maybe vanity isn't the worst vice a man can have. I was going along the street this day I tell you of, and I came to where some fellows were putting one of those big plate glass windows into a store front. They'd got the boarding off one face of the glass, and I turned the corner and came pos onto a full length reflection of myself in that window pane.

"Why," says I to myself, "what a filthy looking bum that fellow is!" And then I realized that the face was mine.

When I got it into my head that that clear-eyed, ragged, unshaved, dirty vk slon in the glass was the reflection of Max Greiber, that decided me. I wasn't a minute deciding to turn square. I knew I was gradually drifting from bad to worse, but this struck me like a club, I stopped drinking then and there—and it wasn't any easy break. It was harder still to get to work. I'd got so used to loafing that I thought I was sick when I began to put some hard locks in once more.

I took the first thing that came at hand. I found a couple of bags and went to the nearest place where they were tearing down a house, and begged some wood. I didn't have an ax, and the workmen wouldn't have trusted me with one if I had asked to borrow it.

I broke the wood into kindling length with a paving brick. When I had two bags full I went through the streets hollering, "Wood! Wood!" till I sold them. That gave me twenty cents. I paid half of it for a shave and the next day, when I'd earned more, I went to the barber again and got my hair cut.

I kept at it like a dog in a treadmill. I wasn't contented with just filling my stomach. As fast as I could I got whole clothing from second hand shops. I hired a room for a dollar a week. A lot of my old pals still hung around, and I set them to work. I bought an ax and sometimes I paid for the right to clean out the refuse wood where a contractor was at work. I cut the wood and sold it to my pals for five or six cents a bag. They had to bring the bags back or they didn't get any more.

Finally, when I got a little money together, I went back to my trade business of my own today. I hide in a hole, with the old folks and I was over that chap I saw in the glass that day—and lucky for me I wasn't too far gone to see myself as I was.

COSMOPOLITAN CARDIFF.

Few Cities in the World Have Such a Mingling of Races.

The preconceived impressions of Cardiff are very far from accurate.