

IF YOU COULD COME.
If you could come to me as I recall
Your face, and I could feel upon my brow
The warm breath of those lips so slight
Could bear some word from them in music fall,
Thrilling the silence in my life with all
The old time sweetness! If I could but hear
When the sun sinks behind the western wall,
And twilight shades the weeping atmosphere,
A rattle in the snow at the gate,
And looking I should see you standing there—
My lonely life would not be desolate,
For this would comfort all my soul's despair,
I know thy life is lovelier—God knows best,
But still the dove courses o'er its empty nest.
—F. L. Stanton in Tribune of Illinois.

IN A DILEMMA.

Mark Ramsey and Job Trotter were often seen at the house of old Squire Filpot. These visits were not due to any regard Mark and Job may have had for the squire, but were clearly traceable to the love which they bore his daughter Judy. The two young men were so much alike physically that they might have been taken for twins. They were tall, strong and well built; they were black-eyed and long-haired, sunburned and hardened by exposure to all sorts of hardships. The resemblance even extended to mental peculiarities. Mark did not know long division from short coming; neither did Job. Mark, given the freest exercise of his arm, could not with a charred chunk have written his name on the gable end of the barn; neither could Job. Being so much alike both physically and mentally, it was small wonder that they loved Judy, who, by the way, was the handsomest girl in the neighborhood.

She was more than merely handsome; she was bright, quick to learn, and, flattering gossip declared, could knit a pair of yarn socks or match the feathers off a chicken as quickly and as effectually as any girl in the community, regardless of educational advantages. Judy loved Mark and Job, but she could not decide which one she preferred. This inability gave her great concern, and often at night, while patching her father's brown jeans, or at evening when crouched in the slowly darkening gold of a dying day, milking the milk cow, she would shut her eyes, bring up the faces of her two lovers, and attempt to force herself into a decision, but in vain, for when the gold of evening had darkened into the charcoal of night, when old mules stood patiently with one foot in the pail of milk, Judy's love remained in equal division.

Old Filpot liked the boys, but, to have saved his life, he could not have told which one was his favorite. He was willing she should marry one of them, it made no difference which, and he secretly wished that one of them, still no matter which, would die, so that the remaining one could make his daughter happy.

Neither one of the young men was ever able to see the girl alone, for they kept so close a watch upon each other's movements that one making his appearance at the squire's house, was sure to be followed immediately by the other.

One morning, just as the squire and Judy had arisen from the breakfast table, voices in the sitting room announced to well accustomed ears the arrival of the lovers. The old man and his daughter went in, and, following a long and worn habit, cordially shook hands with the visitors and made them feel perfectly at home.

"We have come," said Mark, "to see if we can't sooner make some arrangements."
"That's what we have," Job put in.
"I want Judy," Mark added.
"So do I," said Job.

"I love her powerful," Mark observed.
"I love her just about the same," Job declared.
"Gentlemen," said the squire, perplexed, stroking his whiskers, "I don't see how we are going to manage this affair. Judy, don't you, after all, love one just a little better than you do the other?"
"I believe I do, pap," she answered.
"That, we are 'gittin' at it. Now, which one is it?"

"That's what I kain't tell, pap."
"That it goes again, an' we are just as far off as ever. Mark, ain't you got nothin' to suggest?"
"Don't believe I have, Job mout have."
"No, I kain't lessen it is that she marry me an' be done with it."
"Yes, and I reckon I can make such a suggestion in favor of myself," Mark replied, and then half mischievously added: "I do wish this thing was over with, for I am behind with my crap an' my farm's runnin' down, for I have to watch Job so close that—"

"Just the same with me," Job broke in.
"Wall, now," said the old squire, "rutin has got to be did, and did at once, for I'm tired of this here feverish condition, as the feller says. I have heard my gran'daddy talk about cases like this that took place in the old times, and they never failed to git at a settlement somehow ruther. It most have been by a match of some sort—foot races, rassin', or shootin'. I don't know exactly how, but now as I can recollect the way gran'daddy told it they, alius left it to be decided by some's perforty that one hel' over the other."
"I'm not'n willin'," Job declared.
"What do you say, Judy?"
"Suits me," the girl answered.
"All right," said the old man. "We ken now begin to see our way clear; shall it be rassin'?"

They agreed that it should be wrestling, and going out into the yard, gave themselves up to the contest, but the fatal similarity again asserted itself, for the young men were of equal strength and agility. Then they tried foot racing—they were of equal speed; rifle shooting—they were of equal skill.

"Wall, this do beat, and beat it peart, too, anything I ever seed," the old squire declared. "Spoonen you fling up a chip wet or dry?"
"Don't believe I like that idea, for it only shows luck without a perforty," Mark answered. "How is yo' perforty fling on that pint, Job?"
"Perforty low down in the shade, for I don't like the idea."

"Wall," said the old man, "let's go in the house and set down; might as well be settin' while we're thinkin' up sittin' the. Ullical gender comes Parson

Bridle. "Light, parson, and examine yo' saddle," he added, as the preacher drew up at the gate.
The parson dismounted, and, with the old man, followed the lovers into the house.

"Is it possible," said the preacher, in response to a declaration made by the old squire, "that you cannot, even by the most persuasive appeal to sentiment, settle this extremely eccentric courtship?"
"Can't do it, one way nor tuther," the old man rejoined; and then, quickly turning to the girl, he added, "Judy, I've got an idea."

"What is it, pap?"
"Well, it's this: Parson Bridle, here, has seed a good deal of the world—w-y, you've been 'way down in Robinson county, haven't you, parson?"
"Yes," the parson answered proudly.

"That, now," continued the old man, "he has even been 'way down in Robinson county, and is, from the fact that he has seen a good deal of the world, a fair judge of the good points in man; so now, Judy, air you willin' to leave it to the parson and take the case he picks out?"
"Yes, I'm willin'," the girl answered.

"I'm willin' too," Mark quickly spoke up; "but I want to be the parson's right aw if he decides agin me. I'll whip him till the folks will think he has been chewed up and spit up by a threshin' machine."
"And as far me," said Job, "I'm mo'n delighted with the idee, but just let me say that if he decides agin me I'll wallop him till you'd have to get him together with a hay rake."

"Gentlemen," the parson remarked, "I shall render no decision. I am very well satisfied with my position in life, my circuit is comparatively smooth, and I have a pretty good horse; my salary is lagging, but the sisters have given me ninety-eight linsey shirts, and calico handkerchiefs enough to cover the Rock of Ages; so, taking it all into consideration, I do not care to be food for a dyspeptic thrashing machine, or to clog the teeth of a hay rake."

"Ah, Lawd," sighed the old man, "the end ain't no nearer in sight than it was at first. Judy, fetch out the jug," he added, as the preacher said something to an undertone. "Now, boys," he continued, when the jug had been brought, "hep yo'selves."

The boys being mighty partial toward liquor, began to help themselves. The old man took a few pulls and the parson dampened his pucker, but the boys drank recklessly, and after a while they were generally intoxicated.

"Job," said Mark, "I'm the best friend you ever had. You may have Judy."
"Mark," Job responded, "you ain't no better friend to me than I am to you, so you take her."
"Won't do it; you've got to take her."
"No; you've got to."

"Now, we can call on the parson to decide," the old man delightfully exclaimed.
"That's what we can," said Mark. "Parson, you pick out one of us to be the husband of Judy, here, an' I want to say right here that Job's my friend, an' that if you decide agin him I'll larrup you till you'd run through a sifter."
"Parson, I'm in favor of your makin' a decision," Job declared; "and I am willin' to leave it to your judgment; but let me tell you right now, parson, if you decide agin Mark I'll whale you till all that is left of you would ooze through a tow sack."

"Gentlemen," said the preacher, "as I just now remarked, I am not at all displeased with my circuit. I am attached to my ninety-eight linsey shirts, and have become smitten with my calico handkerchiefs. I shall make no decision."
Mark and Job began to stretch themselves on the floor. "Let them sleep," said the old man. "Ho, me," he sighed. "I don't see no way outen this trouble."
"I do," the preacher answered; "step outdoors with me."

When they returned the old man said: "Judy, a decision has been made. You must marry the preacher. Hold on, now don't fly off. He'd do better by you than any one of the boys. Why, jest think, he's got calico handkerchiefs enough to make more bedquilts than you could stuff into a hired man's appetite, and every woman in the community would be—"

"Petrified with envy," the parson suggested.
An expression of delighted resignation shone on the girl's face.
"I will make out the license and do the marryin' myself," said the old man.
"O don't be skeered now; I'll fix the boys all right."
Mark arose, and getting up, aroused Job. "Squire," said Mark, "we got a little too much of your licker. Where did you get it?"
"That preacher that was here sent it to me the other day."
"Wall, he knows what strong licker is; don't lie, Job!"
"That's what he do, Mark," Job added; "I don't know how we air goin' to fix up this here business."

"Neither do I. Where's Judy?"
"It's well you may ask what she is, when you driv' her off in that way," answered the old man.
"Who driv' her off?" Job exclaimed.
"Why, you and Mark, that, when I begged you not to drink so much, but you didn't pay no attention to me. You swore—both of you—that if I didn't stand up here and marry Judy to the preacher you'd kill all of us, and I jest had to do it, and then you driv' the bride and groom away, and you ought to be ashamed of yo'selves."

Mark and Job remained silent, sitting over the fire for an hour at least, and then Mark, looking up, said:
"Job, I don't believe there's but one bigger fool than I am."
"Who's that, Mark?"
"Both of us together."
"You are right, Mark. Spoonen we sounter on down yonder an' fall offen the bluff."—Courier Extra.

It has been discovered that telephone lines can be "duplex" in the same as telegraph, so that two persons can use the wires at once instead of two.

LITTLE STORIES OF ANIMALS.

A Dog That Died for a Fool Master—Curious Death of a Fox.

"I have never let any of my dogs retrieve birds since an experience I had with a cruel sportsman over on the Delaware river late one fall," said a Scranton bird shooter the other day. "The man owned a splendid pointer that knew a good deal more about some things than his master did, and we were both shooting quails over him along the banks of the river. He was lurching with the dog, and the poor creature was often compelled to do what he knew to be senseless things, just because he felt certain that he would be licked like the mischief if he didn't obey. Each side of the river was frozen over out to the main channel, where there was a strip about a foot wide that wasn't covered with ice. One of the quail that I shot started to fly across the river and dropped dead on the thin ice within a few inches of the open channel. My companion ordered the pointer to go and get it, and the obedient dog dashed out upon the ice till he got within a couple of yards or so of the dead bird, when he lalied, for the ice had begun to crack under him. Then he looked back at his master and wagged his tail, and his actions told us as plain as words that he knew it would be dangerous for him to proceed any further."
"I begged the man to call the dog back and let the minks have the quail, but he wouldn't listen to me. Again he ordered the dog to fetch the quail in, and again the dog made an effort to reach it, but the ice cracked and he turned about, whined pitifully, and in every way that he knew how begged his master to call him back. But the heartless man was determined to make the dog do as he said, and he yelled savagely at the pointer to get the dead bird. Then the dog sprang forward and seized the quail. The ice gave way under him, the current was swift, and out of sight the poor thing went, with the bird in his mouth. That was the last the cruel man ever saw of his obedient dog. He hunted down the river for a long distance, but it was useless, for the dog had perished under the ice while faithfully performing his duty. The man was sorry, then, of course, and indeed the poor dog's death taught him a lesson he never forgot."

While hunting partridges near Round Swamp, in Clifton township, last fall, Aaron Bidgood saw a fox scrambling around in a mud puddle at a great rate. He was interested in the animal's queer antics, and after he had watched the lively fox for awhile he came to the conclusion that it was catching frogs, or at least trying to catch them. Its tail was covered with mud, and it was hopping and jumping around in mud and water upon its belly when Bidgood stole up near enough to see that the sly fellow was really gobbling up a frog every few seconds. Bidgood said he didn't care to molest it just then, and while he was watching its capers from the midst of a clump of bushes another fox, apparently the first one's mate, sprang into the mud hole from the opposite side and went to catching the long legged occupants of the puddle on its own hook. When Bidgood had looked at the cunning frog eaters as long as he cared to, he yelled, and the two mud covered foxes floundered out of the puddle in a hurry and scampered directly toward the clump of bushes where the hunter was concealed. They were very much frightened, and the mud on their bushy tails and in their long fur kept their speed down considerably, and when they came along Bidgood killed each of them with a charge of bird shot.

A fox that had been chased by a hound or ten hours lost his life in a peculiar way in the Lackawanna valley late on a day in January. Reynolds had been pursued until he was pretty well tuckered out, and he ran down into the valley from the Spring Brook side. He pointed for the Lackawanna river, but near the bank he changed his course, swung around a large coal breaker, and ran up the steep incline to the head house at the top of the breaker. Through the lead house he dashed, and then ran along a beam, sprang from the end of it to a culm pile, and scampered up the refuse railroad track to the summit, where culm was dumped. At the dump the fox halted past a boy and a mule, and started to slide down the steep pitch of loose mine refuse toward the river. The base of the culm pile has been on fire for several years, the fire extending up the side for forty or fifty feet. When the fox had begun to slide down he couldn't stop himself, and he slid right into the mass of glowing anthracite and was so badly burned before he got through it that he lay down and died close to the river bank. The hound, inside of half an hour, hopped up the incline to the head house. It nosed around and bayed for a few seconds, lost the scent, and then dashed down the slope to a spot where it had left the level ground. There it got on the track again, and when it started up the plane the second time one of the men threw chunks of coal at it and it went yelping out of sight.—Scranton Letter in New York Sun.

A Deputy's Eccentricity.
M. Thivrier, a workingman, elected as such to the present chamber of deputies in France, wears all the time in public the blouse which is the badge of a laborer in that country. M. Thivrier began work in the coal mines at Commeny, France, when twelve years old, and for twenty years remained in them, handling the pick. Afterward he became a vinegrower and dealer in wines. He is a Socialist, but not a communist, "for, having," as a French paper puts it, "acquired his capital by his own hard work, he cannot easily understand how that capital should belong to all the world." Through all his career he has stuck to his workingman's blouse, and it was largely upon the strength of that peculiarity that he was elected a deputy. He would be a man of unusual intelligence and a good speaker. When he came to Paris to take his seat, his blouse, which he wore not only at the chamber but at receptions and all other functions which he attended, made him at once famous.—Paris Letter.

ON METEORIC SHOWERS.

THEIR VISITS OF FREQUENT PERIODICAL OCCURRENCE.

Peculiarities of the Heavenly Displays.
New Features of the Sun Revealed to the Astronomers—A Talk With a Professor on a Sky High Subject.

In answer to several questions regarding the frequency of meteoric showers Professor Vary said:
"There are certain epochs in the year when particular meteoric showers are due. Assiduous observation has given a list of nearly 100 such showers in the course of a year, each of which may be expected on a certain date from a certain part of the heavens."
"Particular showers have characteristic features; that is, some meteors are very swift; others rather slow. Some vanish and leave no trace, while others are accompanied by tails and leave streaks after the nucleus has disappeared. Few of these showers last more than one or two days, though there are some instances where it is suspected that successive meteors belonging to the same group appear during several weeks. Certain dates have been noticed to be more especially favorable epochs. That is, the rare event of an exceptionally large and brilliant meteor or fireball is more apt to occur on certain dates."
"Jan. 25 is the date of the meteoric shower characterized by the appearance of its components, which are usually attended by streaks. The radiant point of this shower is in the constellation called Berce's Hair, a star cluster—one of the morning constellations. As this meteor is claimed to have been seen in the evening it is more likely to have been one of the unclassified sporadic meteors. Information as to the position of motion, apparent brilliancy, color, time of appearance and length of time during which the appearance lasted is likely to be valuable in the recovery of the principal characteristics of an event which is necessarily seen but by few."

"How do you account for these meteoric showers coming at regular periods?" was asked.
"All that we can say is that the celestial spaces are thinly populated in every direction with these scattered fragments, which are veritable miniature planets traveling in different orbits around the sun in many instances, and serving as messengers from one star to another in others."
"The number of them is simply countless. They make up in number what they lack in size, so that if we could gather together all the minute members that go to make up a group it might make a body of very respectable size, although the individual components are so small that they seldom escape complete disintegration and dissolution in their passage through the atmosphere."

"What produces the great light which always follows the passage of a meteor?"
"The light which is seen while the passage of a meteor through the air lasts may be due partly to the combustion of the materials of the air of life, but it is mainly an incandescence of the condensed atmosphere which accumulates in advance of an object which is moving many times the rapidity of a cannon ball—often, I may say, with many hundred times the rapidity of a cannon ball. Under these conditions even the seemingly flimsy resistance of the air becomes as great as that of a solid body, producing intense heat, and in the case of a large meteoric stone frequently resulting in the fracture and demolition of the object."

"Colored meteors are sometimes seen with a peculiar tint of the flame, being due to the burning of some special ingredient of the meteor. We have yellow, green and occasionally red meteors, but the majority are white like the majority of the stars. It cannot be said that any one part of the earth can be more affected by these visitants than another. There is, however, a diurnal periodicity, the larger numbers being seen in the early morning hours when that portion of the heavens comes in view toward which the orbital motion of the earth is carrying us. We then see not merely the comparatively few meteors whose speed is sufficient to enable them to overtake the earth, but that larger number composed of all those which are gathered up in the track of the advancing earth, whether moving with against or against its course."

"The appearance of the collected results of the observation of the total eclipse of Jan. 1, 1889, shows that this event has added many interesting facts to the previous knowledge of such occurrences. A large and very perfect photograph of the corona was obtained by Professor William H. Pickering, of Cambridge, Mass., and one of a smaller size by Professor Barnard, of the Lick observatory."

"These show the shaves of curling fragments about the sun's poles in great detail, indicating the composite nature of many of the individual filaments, and confirming the photographs taken at the previous sun spot minimum of 1878, thus rendering it almost certain that the corona at this period assumes a symmetrical form with regularly disposed filaments curving away on either side of the sun's axis and broad equatorial wings of less discriminated structure."
"All this is very different from what is seen during an eclipse when the activity of the sun is in its height. At such times the corona has a rudely quadrilateral outline, with four wings projecting from regions approximately 40 degrees north and south of the equator, and the whole is made up of curved branching and intersecting streamers extending to a much greater distance from the body of the sun, and with the equatorial shaves less symmetrically disposed. In regard to the extent of the corona, it is difficult to compare successive eclipses observed from different parts of the earth with very varying atmospheric condition. A small amount of haze will blot out much of the fainter detail. The presence or absence of some of these fainter features may merely signify the presence or absence of the condition of their observation, but the variation of type is a thing beyond question. We seem to have a connection in location between the broad equatorial wings and the sun spot zones."

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