

G. W. FAIRBROTHER & CO.

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A Message From the Dead.

A singular discovery was made in Paris one day last week, during the alterations which are now being carried out at the General Post-office. In a panel, near one of the boxes, was found a letter, which had been posted exactly fifty years ago, and which, by some mischance, had got stuck in the panel, instead of finding its way into the box. The letter was duly forwarded to the person to whom it was addressed, who, still more strangely, was alive, and who received it safely. The writer, however, had been dead many years.—London Times.

"Twas two and seventy years ago,
When "Farmer George" was King,
And all his land a riceshoe,
With blossom of the spring—
The time when lovers courted so,
And little birds do sing.

They say that folks are wiser now,
And life has grown complete,
The old days were as sweet, I trow,
Perchance a little sweeter.
The birds upon the cherry bough,
Have never changed their meter.

As eager were the hopes of men,
Their joys, alas! as fleeting,
And lovers' vows as potent then
To set girls' hearts a-beating.
As tender was the spring-time, when
The new-born lambs were bleating.

Some things, thank God, are lingering yet,
And never out of fashion;
The laws of stately etiquette
Have spared the tender passion,
And sometimes human eyes are wet
With tears of soft compassion.

So down Time's vista, faint and far,
Two lovers we descry;
Apart they stand, some sudden jar
Disturbs their harmony.
A cloud hath passed o'er Love's sweet star,
And darkened all the sky.

The youth he watched, his true love's face
With angry, scornful glance;
"Adieu," he cried, "disdainful Grace,
I sail to-night for France,
Some happier man may have my place,
And please you more, perchance."

"Adieu, sir!" said the haughty maid,
"Your fancy chimes with mine;
I pray that when the anchor's weighed
The weather may be fine;
Too long methinks you have delayed
To taste the claret wine."

And so they part, these silly souls,
With bitter words and sore,
And Time's vast ocean moaning rolls
Betwixt them evermore.
And they must starve on niggard doles,
Who feasted heretofore.

A while she said: "He loves me well,
I'll die but never doubt him,
To-morrow he will break the spell;
He knows I could not float him."
Then hark, eternal silence fell,
She sighed—and lived without him.

The days passed slowly into years,
The bloom of youth departed;
No eye beheld nor secret tears,
Or saw the wound that smarted;
Hers was the patient love that ciphers
The sad and broken-hearted.

When fifty years had passed away,
Life's pains no more beset her;
This woman, faded, old and gray,
Waits for the life that's better;
Her maid trips in with silver tray:
"Ma'am, a foreign letter!"

She took it with a wondering smile,
Into her wrinkled hand,
She gazed at it a little while,
She could not understand.
"Twas folded in an ancient style,
The ink was pale and tanned."

What ghost arises from the past
To scare that faithful breast?
A dead man's message come at last,
By cruel Fate suppressed—
"Dear God!" she cried, while tears fell fast,
"I'm ready for my rest."

"O love, forgive," the letter said,
"I can not leave you so,
Write but a word, ere fate be sped,
Whether you will or no;
And then the date the woman read,
'Twas fifty years ago!"

She threw the casement open wide,
This lady most forlorn,
A robin whistled sweet outside,
Upon a leafless thorn,
And sang of Love that never died,
And the Resurrection morn.

A TWO-HEADED FAMILY.

A True Story of What Two Boys Did.

Everybody talked, of course, when it was known that Bob Towne had run away, and had taken his brother Ned with him, and everybody said it was a shame. By everybody I mean all the people in the little Mississippi town in which Bob's mother lived. They did not know why Bob had run away, and they did not know where he had gone; but they talked about it all the same. They said it was a shame for him to leave his widowed mother, and worse still to take his little brother with him, though not one of them could have suggested any possible way in which Bob could have helped his mother by staying. Bob was "curious," however, and people never think well of persons whom they do not understand. Bob was fond of books, for one thing, and because he read a great deal, and did not "sit around" in the village, they said he was morose; and so when the news spread that Bob had gone away in the night, and had taken his brother with him, everybody said: "I told you so," in a tone which indicated that that was the very worst thing they could say.

Bob's mother had a letter, however, which convinced her that her boy was not heartless at any rate. She said nothing about this letter—found in Bob's room—but she read it over and over again, and cried over it, and even kissed it sometimes in secret. The letter was brief and simple. It said:

"MY DEAR MOTHER.—Please don't feel badly at my going away; it is my duty. When I found, after father's death, that the estate was worth so little, and that you had almost nothing except the house you live in, I made up my mind that I must be the head of the family, although I am only fourteen years old. After a good deal of thinking, I have hit upon a plan to make some money. I think, and as Ned wants to join me, I'm going to take him with me. Neither of us can earn anything here, but I believe we can where we're going. At least you won't have us to feed. We shall work for you and for our little sisters, and if we make anything, it will all be yours. If we don't, we will at least have tried. When we succeed we'll let you know where we are. We have to go away without kissing you and little Kate and Mary and Susie, but we must, else you will never let us go. Good-by, and God bless you, mother!"

That was all the trace Bob and Ned left behind them, and nobody could guess where they had gone.

Two days after their disappearance the boys presented themselves to a gentleman who had been a friend of their father, living fifty miles away, and, after exacting from him a pledge of secrecy, Bob introduced his business.

"You said last year at our house that you would let any man who chose to get up your swamp land use it for ten years, or something of that sort."

"Yes, I said this: I have ten thousand acres on the Tallahatchee; part of it was under cultivation before the war, but it has grown up in cane so that it is worth almost nothing now to sell, and I haven't the capital nor the energy at my time of life to get it up again. It is superb and, capable of yielding three bales of cotton to the acre, and if it was under cultivation again it would sell for fifty dollars an acre. What I proposed was to let young Bowling go there and get up as much as he pleased of it, cut and sell the wood he chose, use the land rent free for ten years, and, at the end of that time, receive from me a bonus of five dollars an acre for all the land brought under cultivation. But what of it? Bowling didn't accept the offer."

Bob explained his own purpose to accept it in a small way, going into the swamp country, and making what money he could with his own hands, for his friend knew he had no capital.

"But, my dear boy," said the gentleman, "a white man can't work in the swamp, and you have no money to hire negroes with."

"Did any white man ever try it?" asked Bob.

"Not that I ever heard of." "Besides," said Bob, "we're not white men; we're only white boys, and we won't be very white either, after we've been at work a few months."

After a good deal of explanation and discussion, Major Singer consented to let the boys try their plan, though he had no confidence in it.

"I'll do this," he said. "You may go into the swamp, cut and sell all the wood you can to steamboats when they come up, and cultivate all the land you choose to grub, without any charge for rent. I'll give you a mule and a cart, and enough bacon and meal to last you for a month or two. By that time you'll be tired of the experiment, and you can return the mule and cart on your way home."

Bob asked for the privilege of paying for the mule and cart out of the proceeds of his first crop, and, laughing, the Major consented, naming one hundred dollars as the price.

Five days later the boys ate their supper of bacon and ash-cake on a log on the banks of the Tallahatchee River. It was a lonely, desolate swamp region, and the log on which they sat was twelve miles distant from the nearest human habitation. They were a trifle lonely there in the wild woods, but they had a camp fire and courage, and those go a long way.

The next day they set to work and built a hut to live in, with a rude bunk for a bed. Then Bob "prospected." Much of the land about them had once been cultivated, and there were no trees of any considerable size upon the parts which had been fields; but the growth of cane and brush-wood was appalling.

"Never mind," said Bob. "It is only September now, and we'll get a few acres cleared by spring. Our first work must be to cut a big pile of wood to sell to the steamboats when they come up; if we don't, we can't buy plows or food for our farming operations."

"When will the boats come?" asked Ned.

"Late in the fall or in the winter, whenever the river gets high enough. It isn't navigable now, but when it rises, the steamboats come up to get loads of cotton."

With brave hearts the boys set to work chopping and hauling cord-wood. They made very little progress the first day, but after they had practiced for a few days they became more expert, and at the end of a week they found by measurement that they could together cut and haul about a cord of wood each day. One grown man would have accomplished more than this; but the boys were satisfied. They had brought a grindsome and some iron wedges with them, and there was no reason to doubt that they could maintain their average of a cord a day. The mule kept in good condition on swamp grass and young cane.

Bob laid out, next the river, the little field which he hoped to get ready for cultivation, and before attacking the timber land he took care to cut into cord-wood all the trees in that little patch which were big enough for the purpose. Then the young pioneers went into the woodlands a little further up stream, and there made rather better progress. The fall was unusually dry. No rain fell, and the river got steadily lower. Meantime the woodpile had grown by the last of November to more than sixty cords—enough to pay the boys well for their work whenever the steamboats should come. But when could they come? This question was giving Bob a good deal of uneasiness, because his bacon and meal were running low, and he had spent all the money he had for the axes and other implements. If the river should not rise before the meat gave out what should he do? Bob did not know and the fact troubled him.

In one way the dry season served him well. It parched the swamp, and one morning, Ned, who had shrewdly observed this, went out and applied a torch to the dried-up grass and leaves. The fire swept fiercely over the projected field, and when it had burned out, a good deal more than half the work of clearing that field for cultivation was done. But this did not help the boys to live through the winter,

and that was a perplexity. If they could not manage it, all their work would be thrown away; and Bob passed many anxious hours thinking and planning, but with no other result than to make him sleepless.

Still it did not rain, but one morning Ned came in from observing his water-marks, and reported that the river had risen about three inches during the night. This puzzled Bob, and he carefully watched the water. At noon it had risen two inches more. During the night it rose fully a foot. Then Bob began to suspect the truth.

"I have it, Ned," he said. "Well, how is it? Where does the water come from?"

"From the Mississippi River. That river is high from rains in the north, and it has broken through one of the passes into the Tallahatchee. We'll have steamboats here yet."

"Well, I hope they'll come soon," said Ned. "I've fried our last slice of bacon, and we have only a few pounds of meal left."

"We can eat the mule," said Bob, "rather than starve; but we'll wait on short rations and hope."

There had been a great crop of cotton grown on the Tallahatchee that year, and the dry fall had enabled the planters to pick it more thoroughly than usual. Knowing this, the owners of steamboats at Vicksburg were watching the reports of the water in the Yazoo and Tallahatchee as eagerly as Ned and Bob were watching the water itself, each anxious that his boat should be the first to go up the river.

On the 12th of December Ned cooked the last of the meal. The boys went to bed that night out of food. The next morning they had no breakfast, and had begun to think of killing the mule, or making a journey to the nearest plantation, when about noon a boat appeared. She blew her whistle and stopped her engines.

"What do you ask for your wood?" shouted the Captain.

"Three and a half," answered Bob.

"Give you three and a quarter, and take all you got," said the Captain.

"Will you throw in a decent dinner?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

And with that the boat made her landing, and the wood, sixty-three cords, was measured. Then the boys went on board to dinner. There they learned that in consequence of the prolonged dry season all the people along the river had been too busy picking cotton to cut any wood, and hence the boat had been obliged to send her own men ashore twice to chop wood for her engines. Knowing that other boats were coming, the Captain of this one had made haste to buy all of Bob's wood, meaning to take a part of it at once, and the rest on his way down the river. He had driven a sharp bargain, under the circumstances, but Bob was well satisfied when he received \$204.75 for the pile. His first care was to pay of the Captain a good supply of provisions; his next to write a letter to his mother, inclosing a fifty-dollar bill, and, without telling her where he was, giving her news of his own and Ned's health, and promising to write again at the next opportunity. This letter the Captain took to post at Vicksburg.

The mule was saved, and the problem which Bob and Ned had set out to solve was in a fair way to be worked out. They had money enough now to buy necessary plows, etc., which they ordered from Vicksburg by the next trip of the boat, and some cash to spare for emergencies. They went to work with a will at their clearing, and before spring opened they had a field prepared which was two hundred yards long and one hundred and fifty yards wide. Its area was therefore somewhat greater than six acres, and it was land of the very richest sort. Bob made a journey to the nearest plantation, and brought back a cart-load of cotton seed, together with the seeds of a variety of vegetables, for which beds were made around the hut.

The summer's work was very hard and very hot. The rich land produced weeds as well as cotton, and Ned remarked that "Weeds never go to picnics or take Saturday afternoons off." In this the boys imitated the weeds, working early and late in their crop, barely giving themselves time to hoe out their kitchen-garden occasionally. They had distinctly overworked themselves, but that was better than the opposite mistake. In August the holls began to open and the boys to pick cotton. It was not long before they discovered that they had grown more cotton than they could pick, and that they must either have help or lose a part of their crop. So one day Ned mounted the mule and rode across the Yalabusha River, and out of the swamp into the poor hill country. There the scanty crops were easily picked, and as he was able to offer money wages he easily secured some half-grown negro boys as pickers. Their wages amounted to comparatively little, and their help secured the whole of the boys' crop.

Bob had no gin or cotton-press, but there were both on the plantation twelve miles down the river; and when the picking was over the boys built a raft, and loading their whole crop of cotton on it, floated it down to this neighbor's gin.

They had not made the three bales per acre which the land was said to be capable of producing under good cultivation, but they had made twelve bales, worth—at the high price which cotton at that time commanded—something more than one thousand dollars.

Bob and Ned now closed their hut, turned the mule out to browse, and took passage for Vicksburg on the boat that carried their cotton.

One morning the rumor ran through their native village that "Bob and Ned Towne had come home, ragged, and looking like tramps."

But there was one woman and there were three little girls in that town in whose eyes Bob and Ned looked like anything but tramps. Their clothes were worn, indeed, but they were hugged and kissed by their mother and sisters just as heartily as if they had been the best-dressed youths in the village.

"Now you'll stay at home, won't you, you naughty runaway boys?" said their proud and happy mother, when they had fully recounted their fifteen months' experiences. "I want my boys."

"We can't, mother," said Bob. "We're the two heads of this family, you know. I'm one head, and Ned has fairly earned the right to be the other; and we've got property interests now. We stopped at Major Singer's on the way home, and have made a new bargain with him. We've bought a plantation."

Then Bob explained that the Major had agreed that they should mark off a tract of four hundred acres where their hut stood, and take it at five dollars an acre—quite all that it would sell for then, because of the difficulty of getting labor for clearing land. They were to have their own time in which to pay for the tract, but they meant to work the debt off within a year or two by hiring one or two hands for their crop, and thus increasing their force and their earnings.

"So you see, mother," said Bob, "we've got to go back to our plantation."

"Very well," she replied; "and we are going with you. The family mustn't be separated from its head, and I want my boys, and I think my boys want me too when they are lonely down there in the swamp."

"Indeed we do," exclaimed both boys, "Hurrah for mother!"

Three years later, as I happen to know, the last dollar of debt was paid. The boys have built a good house there, which their mother has made a home for them. They have now, after a dozen years' work, a gin-house, a cotton-press, twelve mules, a good many cows, and Bob has a baby of his own, having found a wife on one of his business trips.

The people of his native village, when they heard that he had actually bought the plantation, said again that "Bob Towne always was a curious boy."—George Cary Eggleston, in Harper's Young People.

Magnetic Storms—How They Affect the Telegraph Wires.

Last night a magnetic storm interrupted many of the telegraphic wires between here and the West, and, in consequence, the Associated Press dispatches were late from many points.

Mr. Hamilton, the electrician of the Western Union Company, said this morning that the appearance of the aurora borealis, which was seen last night, was almost invariably accompanied by a magnetic storm working more or less disturbance with the wires. Whether the aurora is due to the storm, or the storm to the aurora, is not known. Some scientists contend that magnetic storms are due to changes in the sun's surface, and look for new spots or the disappearance of old ones upon the appearance of brilliant northern lights. The magnetic storm travels very much like an ordinary storm, but more rapidly and in waves. It is in this respect like a hot or a cold wave of air, but can only be felt by the telegraph operators. If the storm is moving in the same direction as the current on a telegraph wire the battery current will become so strong as to be unmanageable. If the storm travels in the opposite direction the battery current will be entirely neutralized and no work can be done. Upon wires running north and south a storm moving from east to west will have no effect. When the current derived from the magnetic storm becomes so strong as to render the instruments useless the wires are disconnected from the batteries and worked with the magnetic storm alone. This has been frequently done on even long circuits with perfect success. Mr. Hamilton has known the Western Union wires between New York and Buffalo to work for six hours at a stretch without the aid of batteries, and similar instances are sometimes reported from other cities. When telegraphy was new no use could be made of the wires when such a storm affected them, heavy sparks flying from the instruments and frightening the operatives. The fact that the line would work without the battery in such circumstances was discovered by accident. When working without the battery the work can be done only in waves, all currents ceasing at intervals of a few moments and reappearing. If finely-insulated wires are at the disposal of the operator, what is called a loop circuit is made with two wires, and the earth, which usually takes the place of one wire, is dispensed with. But this requires excellent wires.

The magnetic storm of August 28, 1859, is the severest of which any record exists. For several days no batteries were needed. So strongly were all electric currents disturbed that the electrotyping plates from which the Springfield Republican was printed could not be made. The Sandwich Island volcano showed great activity at the time and many new sun spots appeared, to which phenomena many persons attributed the storm. Magnetic disturbances which interfere with the telegraph are not always accompanied by a light from the aurora borealis which can be distinguished.—N. Y. Evening Post.

Mayor Grubbs, of Indianapolis, has decided that selling peanuts on Sunday is not a work of charity or of necessity, and has fined a peanut man for the offense.

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL.

—The average attendance of the Sunday-schools throughout the United States is said to be eighty.

—The revised New Testament is now regularly used in the pulpits of at least twenty leading Presbyterian churches in New York.

—Instruction in grammar has been abolished in the Cincinnati common schools, elementary lessons in the best English being substituted.

—Mr. Kimball, the "church debt raiser," has thus far labored in behalf of 160 churches, being instrumental in raising from church members the respectable sum of \$11,000,000.

—A single Methodist college, the Ohio Wesleyan University, is represented by two missionaries in Japan, six in China, three in India, one in Italy, two in South America, and one in Mexico.

—The New Testament has just been translated into the Korean language, and a woman of Glasgow promises to provide half the salary of the first Korean evangelist for the first five years.

—The Connecticut Bible Society has canvassed 68,859 families, and found 1,493 Protestant families without Bibles and 11,753 who don't go to church. The Congregational denomination is the most numerous, containing 17,220 families. The Roman Catholic comes next with 15,315; then the Methodist with 12,309, the Episcopal with 9,907, and the Baptist with 6,202. There are only 131 Unitarian families in the Wooden Nutmeg State, but there are 5,153 that represent themselves as having "no religious preferences."

Quaint Sayings of the Pacific Coast.

The great West has become noted for quaint and expressive phrases coined by the rough element of the coast. The miner and prospector, as he wandered through the hills and followed the circuitous valleys and narrow passes, prefixed names to these places such as "gulches," and "canyons," until almost every canyon and gulch has been dubbed with some odd name which forever afterward will designate the locality.

The mountaineer, after years of Western life, finds himself lost in an Eastern metropolis and fails to meet his engagement on prompt time, but is not at a loss to give a decided reason for his delay, because of "getting lost among the canyons." Terse and pointed remarks like that of the man who said: "I did not fight him, but had he come a step further the doctors would have thought, when they dissected him, that they had struck a new lead mine," are quite common among miners.

How expressive are the sayings: "He is a gashed vein, and has pinched." "He shows well on the surface, but there is nothing in his lower levels;" or, "He didn't assay worth anything." He who lacks courage is in Western parlance devoid of "grit" and has no "sand." Men who roughed it in the early days on the Pacific coast are called "old-timers," and when they die it is not uncommon for their associates to speak of their taking-off as their having "passed in their checks." Those who have toiled through the snows and braved the dangers of crossing great mountain ridges, have coined a style of expression upon the death of an old friend which, to them, is fuller of meaning than the plainman can realize—"He has gone over the range." Each State and Territory on the Pacific slope has its peculiar phrases, and there are many common to all.—Omaha Bee.

The Way Women Boss a Pillow.

Among the recent inventions is a pillow-holder. It is explained that the pillow-holder is for the purpose of holding a pillow while the pillow-case is being put on. We trust this new invention will not come into general use, as there is no sight more beautiful to the eyes of man than to see a woman hold a pillow in her teeth while she gently manipulates the pillow-case over it. We do not say that woman is beautiful with her mouth full of pillows. No one can ever accuse us of saying that, but there is something home-like and old-fashioned about it that cannot be replaced by any invention. We know that certain over-fastidious women have long clamored for some new method of putting on a pillow-case, but these people have either lost their teeth, or the new ones they have bought do not grasp the situation. They have tried several new methods, such as blowing the pillow-case up and getting the pillow in before the wind got out, and they have tried to get the pillow in by rolling up the pillow-case until the bottom is reached, and then placing the pillow on end and gently unrolling the pillow-case, but all these schemes have their drawbacks. The old style of chewing one end of a pillow and holding it the way a retriever dog holds a duck till the pillow-case is on, and then spanking the pillow a couple of times on each side, is the best, and it gives the woman's jaws about the only rest they get during the day. If any invention drives this old custom away from us, and we no more see the matrons of the land with their hair full of feathers and their mouths full of striped bed-ticking, we shall feel that one of the dearest of our institutions has been ruthlessly torn from us, and that the fabric of our National supremacy has received a sad blow, and that our liberties are in danger.—Washington Capital.

—The correspondence in a recent English breach-of-promise suit weighed seven pounds, although covering a period of but half a year. It included yards of poetry.