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**JOHNNIE'S WISH.**  
When I'm yanked out of bed at six,  
Just when I want to sleep,  
An' made to dress myself an' fix  
The fires and tend the sheep;  
An' got the wood in from the shed,  
An' milk the cows, an' clean  
OP' 'Dexter's' stall and air his bed,  
An' fill the old tubben;  
With scraps an' swill an' tote it down  
To them 'ere nasty swine,  
An' do a lot o' chores in town  
I n' hang the clothes on line;  
When sich things happen, I be bound  
It makes me yell an' bawl,  
An' wish Columbus hadn't found  
America at all!

**COMETH SOON OR LATE.**  
It was the habit of the Living Skeleton to leave his hotel promptly every morning at 10 o'clock, if the sun was shining, and to shuffle rather than to walk down the gravel street to the avenue of palms. There, picking out a seat on which the sun shone, the Living Skeleton would sit down and seemed to wait patiently for some one who never came. He didn't seem to have energy enough even to read, and so it was that Robbins sat down one day on the bench beside him and said sympathetically, "I hope you are feeling better to-day."  
The Skeleton turned toward him and laughed a low, noiseless and mirthless laugh for a moment, and then said, in a hollow, far-away voice that had no lungs behind it: "I am through with feeling either better or worse."  
"Oh, I hope it is not as bad as that," said Robbins; "the climate is doing you good down here, is it not?"  
"I have no more interest in climate," said the Skeleton. "I merely seem to live because I have been in the habit of living for some years; I presume that is it, because my bugs are entirely gone. Why-I can talk or why I can breathe is a mystery to me. You are perfectly certain you can hear me?"  
"Oh, I hear you quite distinctly," said Robbins.  
"To tell the truth, I am dead, practically. You know the old American story about a man who walked around to save funeral expenses; well, it isn't quite that way with me, but I can appreciate how the man felt. Still, I take a keen interest in life, although you might not think so. You see, I haven't much time left; I am going to die at 8 o'clock on April 30—8 o'clock at night, not in the morning, just after table d'hotel is done with."  
"You are going to what?" cried Robbins, in astonishment.  
"I'm going to die that day. You see, I have got things to such a point that I can die any time I want to. I could die right here now if I wished. If you have any mortal interest in the matter I'll do it, and show you that what I say is true. I don't mind much, you know, although I have fixed on April 30 as the limit. It wouldn't matter a bit for me to go off now if it would be of any interest to you."  
"I beg you," said Robbins, very much alarmed, "not to try any experiments on my account. I am quite willing to believe anything you say about the matter—of course you ought to know."  
"Yes, I do know," answered the Living Skeleton, sadly. "Of course, I have had my struggle with hope and fear, but that is all past now, as you may well understand. The reason that I have fixed the date for 30th of April is this: You see I have only a certain amount of money—I do not know why I should make any secret of it—I have exactly 240 francs to-day, over and above the 100 francs which I have set aside for another purpose. I am paying 8 francs a day at the Golden Dragon; that you see will keep me just thirty days, and then I intend to die."  
The Skeleton laughed again, without sound, and Robbins moved uneasily on the seat.  
"I don't see," he said finally, "what there is to laugh about in that condition of affairs."  
"Don't you?" said the Skeleton.  
"Well, I don't suppose there is very much, but there is something else that I consider very laughable, and that I will tell you if you will keep it a secret. You see the old Golden Dragon himself—I always call our inn-keeper the Golden Dragon, just as you call me the Living Skeleton."  
"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Robbins, stammering.  
"Oh, it doesn't matter at all. You are perfectly right and I think it a very apt term. Well, the Golden Dragon makes a great deal of his money by robbing the dead. You didn't know that, did you? You thought it was the living who supported him, and goodness knows he robs them when he has a chance. When a man dies in the Golden Dragon he, or his friends, rather, have to pay very sweetly for it. The Dragon charges them for refurbishing the room. Every stick of furniture is charged for, all the wall paper, and so on. I suppose it is right to charge something, but the Dragon is not content with that is right. He knows he has lost a customer, and so he makes all he can out of him. The furniture so paid for is not replaced and the walls are not papered again, but the Dragon doesn't abate a penny of his bill on that account.  
"Now, I have inquired of the furnishing man on the street back of the hotel, and he has written on his card just the cost of mattresses, sheets, pillows and all that sort of thing, and the amount comes up to about 50 francs. I have put in an envelope the furniture man. I have written also in the letter, telling the old man on just what the things will cost the he needs, and have referred him to the card of the furniture man who has given me the figures. This envelope I have addressed to the Dragon, and he will find it when I am dead. It is the joke that old man De-

myself have put up on the Dragon, and my only regret is that I shall not be able to enoy a look at the Dragon's countenance as he reads my last letter to him.  
"Another sum of money I have put away in good hands where he won't have a chance to get it, for my funeral expenses, and then you see I am through with the world. I have nobody to leave that I need worry about or who would either take care of me or feel sorry for me if I needed care or sympathy, which I do not. So that is why I laugh and that is why I come down and sit on this bench in the sunshine and enjoy the posthumous joke."  
A sort of friendship sprang up between Robbins and the Living Skeleton—at least, as much of a friendship as can exist between the living and the dead, for Robbins was a muscular young fellow who did not need to live at the Golden Dragon on account of his health, but merely because he detested an English winter. Besides this, it may be added, although it is really nobody's business, that a nice girl and her parents lived in this particular part of the south of France.  
One day Robbins took a little excursion in a carriage to Toulon. He had invited the nice girl to go with him, but on that particular day she could not go. There was some big charity function on hand, and one necessary part of the affair was the wheeling of money out of the people's pockets, and the nice girl had undertaken to do part of the wheeling. On the evening of the day there was to be a ball at the principal hotel in the place, also in connection with this very desirable charity. Robbins had reluctantly gone to Toulon alone, and you may depend upon it he was back in time for the ball.  
"Well," he said to the nice girl when he met her, "what luck collecting to-day?"  
"Oh, the greatest luck," she replied enthusiastically, "and who do you think I got the most money from?"  
"I am sure I haven't the slightest idea—that old English duke he certainly has money enough."  
"No, not from him at all; the very last person you would expect it from—your friend the Living Skeleton."  
"What?" cried Robbins, in alarm.  
"Oh, I found him on the bench where he usually sits, in the avenue of palms. I told him all about the charity, and how useful it was, and how necessary, and how we all ought to give as much as we could toward it, and he smiled and smiled at me in that curious way of his. Yes," he said, in a whisper, "I believe the charity should be supported by every one; I will give you eighty francs. Now, wasn't that very generous of him? Eighty francs, that was ten times what the duke gave, and as he handed me the money he looked up at me and said in that awful whisper of his—'Count that over carefully when you get home and see if you can find out what else I have given you. There is more than eighty francs there.' Then, after I got home, I—"  
But here the nice girl paused, when she looked at the face of Robbins, to whom she was talking. The face was ghastly pale, and his eyes were staring at her but not seeing her. "Eighty francs," he was whispering to himself, and he seemed to be making a mental calculation in subtraction. Then noticing the girl's amazed look at him, he said:  
"Did you take the money?"  
"Of course I took it," she said.  
"Why shouldn't I?"  
"Great heavens!" gasped Robbins, and then he turned and fled, leaving the nice girl transfixed with astonishment and staring after him with a frown on her pretty brow.  
"What does he mean by such conduct?" she asked herself. But Robbins disappeared from the gathering through in the large room of the hotel, dashed down the steps, and hurried along the narrow pavement toward the Golden Dragon. The proprietor was standing in the hallway with his hands behind him, a usual attitude with Dragon.  
"Where," gasped Robbins, "is Mr. —Mr.—" and then he remembered he didn't know the name. "Where is the Living Skeleton?"  
"He has gone to his room," answered the Dragon, "he went early to-night—he wasn't feeling well, I think."  
"What is the number of his room?"  
"No. 40," and the proprietor rang a loud, jangling bell, whereupon one of the chambermaids appeared.  
"Show this gentleman to No. 40."  
The girl preceded Robbins up the stairs. Once she looked over her shoulder, and said in a whisper, "Is he worse?"  
"I don't know," answered Robbins; that's what I have come to see."  
At No. 40 the girl paused and rapped lightly on the door panel. There was no response. She rapped again, this time louder. There was still no response.  
"Try the door," said Robbins.  
"I am afraid to," said the girl.  
"Why?"  
"Because he said if he were asleep the door would be locked, and if he were dead the door would be open."  
"When did he say that?"  
"He said it several times, sir, and about a week ago the last time."  
Robbins turned the handle of the door; it was not locked. A dim light was in the room, but a screen before the door hid it from sight. When he passed around the screen, he saw, upon the square marble-topped arrangement at the head of the bed, a candle burning, and its light shone on the dead face of the Skeleton, which had a grim smile on its thin lips, while in its clinched hand was a letter addressed to the proprietor of the hotel.  
The Living Skeleton had given more than the eighty francs to that deserving charity.—Detroit Free Press.

**DEAR MOTHER DEATH.**  
When night comes down to cover  
The pleasant hills and sea,  
Then little children hover  
About the mother's knee.  
Their childish griefs and pleasures  
Fade with the fading sky,  
And all their precious treasures  
Drop and forgotten lie.  
Close, close their forms she presses,  
Kisses their weary eyes,  
And mingles soft caresses  
With heart-born lullabies.  
So, when life's day is ended,  
Its joys and sorrows o'er,  
And when its visions splendid  
Delight the heart no more,  
Dear Mother Death enfolds us  
In arms that soothe and bless,  
And lulls us while she holds us  
To sweet forgetfulness.  
—George Horton.

**WHO WINS?**  
In the year 1857, Delhi, though shorn of its ancient splendor, was still a place to talk and dream of.  
The bazaars were filled with rare and costly merchandise, and streets of the capital contained nothing but jewelry, which was largely exported to Europe and America.  
But in a single night all this was changed, and instead of the hum of toiling thousands there came the brazen notes of the war-trumpet, the boom of cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the steely flash of naked sabres.  
British valor was once more called upon to defend the honor of Old England against a nation in revolt—a handful, so to speak, of devoted men were pitted against Sepoy, outnumbering them a hundred to one or more.  
Two officers were seated in a tent enjoying a weed and a cup of fragrant coffee after the toil of the day, on which a hard battle had been fought against the enemy, victory declaring for the side of the British.  
"This is a change with a vengeance," remarked Captain Vandeleur, a gallant soldier in a crack cavalry regiment. "A fortnight ago we were dancing at General Coghlan's party, with his sweet granddaughter, Cicely, as an engaging partner; now we caper to different music, with no lady friends to smile encouragement upon us."  
"Quite right, old fellow," laughed Cyril Benthorpe, surgeon in the corps, and as brave and handsome a fellow as ever used lancet to relieve suffering humanity. "I'm afraid we were both hit in that quarter; an affection of the heart, which, perhaps, a rebel bullet will cure one of these days."  
"It's a soldier's lot if it does," said Vandeleur lightly. "I had no idea though, Benthorpe, that you were in the lists against me; but we needn't be less friends for that, need we, old man?"  
"Certainly not," said his friend, whose face assumed a more serious air as he added: "By the way, I wonder why we have received no news from the old general. I hope the rebels are giving him no trouble."  
"By Jove! I never thought of that. But here comes Major Pringle, looking like another Bombastes Furioso, full of news."  
"Hallo, you fellows," said the major, "do you know that some friends of yours are in great peril? I refer to the Coghlan's."  
"We're sorry to hear that, Pringle," remarked Benthorpe. "How did the news reach our camp?"  
"A fellow brought a few lines from the general, rolled up, and hidden in his ear. A squadron of our corps is to start to-night to relieve the beleaguered little garrison, if possible, and to bring its members in."  
"I should like to go, Pringle," remarked Vandeleur as he poured out a bumper for his chief with a view of propitiating him.  
"So should I," put in Benthorpe eagerly.  
"What, two of you badly hit in that direction?" laughed Pringle. "Well, well, I'm no lady's man myself, and so won't enter into rivalry with you fellows. I have already detailed you both in orders for the smart little affair. The trumpet will sound boot and saddle at nine. We shall have a moon to guide us, thank goodness!"  
"See here, Benthorpe," said Vandeleur, who was the first to break the silence that had come upon both after the major left, "I love Cicely, so do you; let us decide now who shall have her."  
"How? in what way?"  
"We are now going to the relief of the place—the man who reaches her side first shall win her hand—that is, provided she is willing; the other fellow must retire gracefully."  
Benthorpe pondered over the proposal for a few minutes, and then placing his hand in Vandeleur's, said with all a soldier's frankness:  
"Done with you, old fellow, it's a bargain. If you win, I'll congratulate you; if I, I shall expect the same treatment at your hands."  
Anything more incongruous than this staking love on the issue of a dangerous expedition could not be imagined.  
The moon had just shown itself over a top of mango trees when the cavalry started on their errand of mercy to rescue women and children from death and dishonor, and to succor brave men who at that moment were battling against great odds for a life.  
Delhi was soon left behind, and the boom of cannon became fainter and fainter, until at length it ceased altogether. The squadron rode through silent villages, embowered in palm trees, whose tall tops looked fairy in the moonlight which flooded every thing.  
A few village curs barked defiance, and occasionally a troop of jackals made night hideous with their screams.  
A short halt was called near a small or miniature lake, where the

were water, and the men partook of such refreshment as their haversacks afforded.  
This done, they saw to their girths, and re-mounting by word of command, lest the sound of the trumpet should warn the rebels of their approach, they galloped forward, the clatter of their swords and accoutrements awakening the echoes of the night, and sounding ominously of impending strife.  
"By Jove! they're at it hammer and tongs!" remarked Vandeleur to Benthorpe in a stern tone. "I'm glad to hear that; it shows that the garrison are still holding out."  
"Yes. Now to rescue Cicely," said Benthorpe with a grim smile. "For once I shall become a combatant officer, and shall use my sword to wound and slay, instead of my sword to defend and save."  
The black hounds deserve neither pity nor consideration, they have committed so many atrocities."  
Every man of the British army shared these sentiments to the full, and resolved that, whenever the shock of battle came, to neither ask for nor give quarter to such dastardly foemen. Swords leaped from steel scabbards, and for a moment both horses and men were almost as motionless as statues.  
Then came the clarion notes of the trumpet, sounding the charge, and away went our brave fellows, straight as an arrow from a well-bent bow, for the enemy.  
The relief had come not a moment too soon, for when the first British sabre descended on the head of a rebel Sepoy, a hand-to-hand fight was going on between the garrison and the mutineers.  
Vandeleur and Benthorpe kept close together, and thrust and parried, and gave downright blows, as they made their way through swarms of dusky foemen, whose faces blanched before the courage displayed by British soldiers, who, if well-handled, were always invincible.  
At last Vandeleur was able to take General Coghlan by the hand, and to congratulate him.  
"Where is Miss Coghlan?" Benthorpe asked.  
"She was safe a moment ago."  
"By Heavens! that's her voice calling for help!" exclaimed Vandeleur, as, spurring his horse forward, he rode in that direction, followed by Benthorpe, both of whom saw the woman they loved in the arms of an officer of sowars (irregular cavalry), who was well-mounted, and at that moment was riding off with his lovely prize.  
Both men rode after the wretch, eager to be the first to rescue Cicely. It was a race for love, and promised to be a long one, for the rebel's horse was a powerful animal, and kept up a good pace, in spite of its double burden.  
Once out upon the open plain the chase became exciting, for the sowar, seeing himself pursued, put forth every effort to outdistance his foes, from whom he would meet no mercy if overtaken.  
Vandeleur being a light weight, and a good rider, was gradually heading away from his friend Benthorpe, when his horse caught its foot in a rope and stumbled.  
This gave Benthorpe the advantage, and he was not slow to use it, for he shot ahead with a grim smile of pleasure, and was pleased to find that he was gaining on the sowar.  
Suddenly the fellow wheeled half-round, and taking deliberate aim fired at his pursuer, whose horse was hit and fell under him.  
By this time Vandeleur rode up, when Benthorpe shouted:  
"Frank, win her—save Cicely!"  
Vandeleur's answer was to wave his hand, as he kept straight on, like a blood-hound on the scent of death.  
"By Heavens!" he hissed between his clenched teeth, "he'll escape me after all if I'm not careful!"  
Snatching a pistol from the holster, he fired, but the cap only snapped. With an anathema of disgust, he produced its fellow, and being a noted shot, fired this time with success, for the sowar reeled in the saddle, and fell to the ground, still, however, holding Cicely in his arms.  
When Vandeleur's sword entered the rebel's body it was only just in time to save Cicely's life; another moment and the fellow's dagger would have been plunged into her heart.  
The war is over, and in dear old England Major Vandeleur stands at the altar with Cicely Coghlan, Benthorpe being best man.  
"Twas not till the honeymoon was over that Frank told his wife of the little incident of "Who Wins?"—Saturday Evening Post.

**"A Snap."**  
"Ah," said Jacksnipe, as he looked over 12,470 acres of marsh, of which he seemed the sole inhabitant, "this is what I call a Snap. There are none to molest and I shall Etsoons gather Four Bushels of Tender Worms."  
So he alighted and inserted his Flexible Beak in the soft Earth, and he said: "The earth is mine."  
But there came a Cold Wind, which Froze every thing as it came. It froze the Tender Worm Crosswise in the Jacksnipe's Flexible Beak, so that neither Worm nor Jacksnipe could get away, and in a few Short Moments there was a Frappe Jacksnipe on the Marsh.  
"That is what I call a Snap," said the Cold Wind.  
Moral.—It is a poor snap that won't work both ways, especially in a backward spring.—Forestand Stream.

**A Kiss in Boston.**  
He—May I—I—have a kiss, Mehitable?  
Miss Mehitable Beaconhill (from Boston)—If you see proper to bring about a paroxysmal contact between the labial appendages of the superior and inferior maxillaries, I shall not seriously object.—Texas Sittings.