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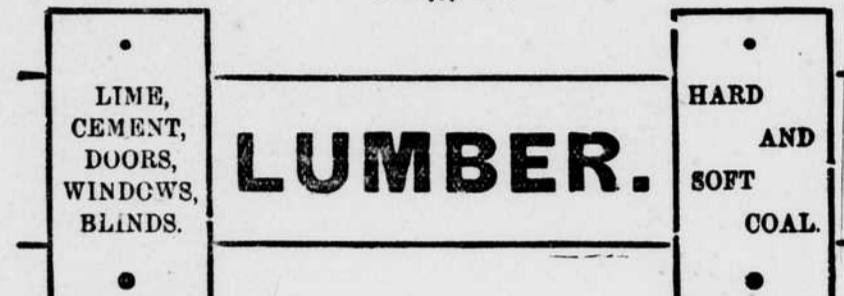
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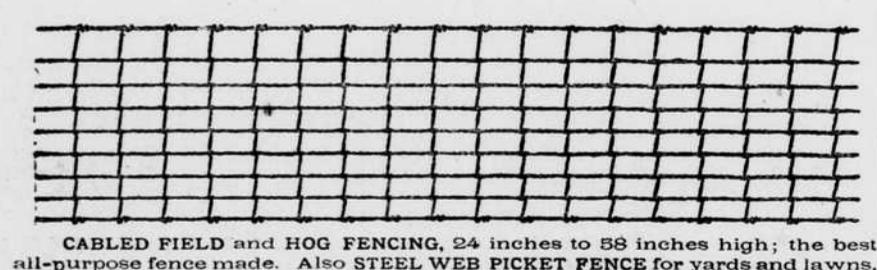
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### DISAPPOINTMENT.

The husbandman of human hearts am I—  
Older than all the tillers of the soil.  
I've seen the hopes of proudest men recoil  
And expectation pale as I passed by.  
All lands are mine! Of people low and high  
I gather tribute. Of his daily toll  
Not one refuses when I take the spoil.  
Though breaking hearts are vainly wondering  
Why.

Yet, when I've plowed about the roofs of pride,  
Blown with my cold winds till weak faith was  
strong,  
Drenched till the heart was moistened through  
and through  
And all its powers of fruitfulness were tried,  
The hearts of men from sighing turn to song,  
For life gains meaning that they never knew!

—Christian Register.

### THE BOY ORATOR.

"If the weather keeps up, I'm afraid Jack can't get here," said Albert Haledale. He was sitting in the window of his room in "Junior hall" and staring out on the campus, where the rain was pouring on the muddy pools and patches of sodden grass. "The ticket agent says trains can't cross if the Macoupin rises much more."

"Rise or no rise, Jack Duckles'll be here on hand when there's a debate on foot," Dick Arlington spoke from the bed. He was buried in pillows and a dog eared copy of Horace.

"He'd come through fire, to say nothing of water, to save our noble Philos from defeat at the hands of the base, craven Linophilans! The very mention of the hated name stirs me heart's blood!" and Dick sat up and looked oratorically awhile.

"Well, he'll have plenty of water to come through! Our chances are pretty slim without him. Gardiner can never hold up against Brooks and Guthridge, with all the Linos back of them. I don't see why Jack couldn't have put off going to St. Louis till next week."

"My child," said Dick, throwing the much abused Horace on the center table, where it bumped its venerable head against solid geometry and fell to the floor, "how often must I tell you that business is business? Even a contest debate must stand aside where business—"

"Shut up! The thing is we don't want those fellows crowding over us. They're going to have a great spread if they do win, and Guthridge has promised to ride Gardiner around the campus if they don't, and you know how heavy Gardiner is. I saw Brooks—Come in. Hello, Gardiner; what's the news?"

Gardiner stood in the doorway, letting the rain drop from the ferrule of his umbrella in a pool on the carpet. "I've just been down to the station. The Macoupin is over the long bridge and is still rising—no more trains this evening."

"Jove!" Dick was walking up and down, hands in pockets. "That looks bad for us Philos. I suppose there is no news from Jack?"

"Yes—telegram. He says he'll leave St. Louis on the 4 o'clock train."

"Then he's at Macoupin station now," said Albert. "Two miles from school and no way to cross a miserable little brook that is dried up most of the year! Can't postpone the debate, can we?"

"No. Guthridge and Brooks have to leave tomorrow, and the fellows from Springfield are going home tonight."

"Well, perhaps Jack'll come. If he doesn't, we'll all stand by you, Gardiner, and do our best."

It was raining when Jack left St. Louis. East St. Louis looked more forlorn than ever, and the country beyond was fairly drenched. He was deep in his speech for the evening's debate when the train reached Macoupin station. He finished the argument and looked up.

"What are you stopping so long for?" he asked of no one in particular.

"The conductor says the creek is up over the bridge and the train cannot cross. He has wired for orders," answered a man who had just entered the car.

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"The conductor says the creek is up over the bridge and the train cannot cross. He has wired for orders," answered a man who had just entered the car.

"The water's high enough to put out the fires, and the bridge isn't safe," said the blue capped official.

Jack fairly danced with excitement.

"But I must cross! Why, I have to—oh, I just must get over to the college even if I have to swim! Can't you try to cross?"

"No. And here's orders to pull back to East St. Louis. And, young fellow, take my advice and don't try swimming when ole Macoupin is a-boomin'. All aboard!"

But Jack didn't go aboard. He watched the train out of sight down the long, wet perspective of the rails. Then he went into the station.

"Say," he said to the man in charge, "can I get a hand car or a boat or something here? I have to get across to Carlinville tonight."

The station agent looked at him meditatively.

"Hand car?" he queried. "There's nary hand car on the place, an ole man Dorsey, he's got the only boat on the crick."

"Where can I find him?" asked Jack. "Who? Ligge Dorsey? Waal, now; kain't say. Like's not in bed. Broke his leg last week."

"Where is the boat?" Jack was growing impatient. The man was so provokingly deliberate.

"Boat! Waal, now, you've got me. Last I hear tell of it, a man five miles up this here crick hed it, else Dorsey swapped it to a man over in Jersey country, an I don't just remember which."

"Can't you suggest something?" asked Jack.

"Oh, yes! I reckon the bes' thing you kin do's to wait till tomorrow. Ef it don't rain no more, the crick's mighty likely to go down so's you kin cross on the train."

"I suppose I couldn't walk across?"

"Walk? Waal, not unless you've got a power of spunk an muscle. I wouldn't go a-trying it, less I wanted to git myself drowned."

Jack walked up and down for a moment in silence. Suddenly he paused.

"See here," he said, "I'm going to try it. There's my card and—" "Walk? Waal, now—" But Jack was gone.

The rain had slackened to a cold steady drizzle, and as he walked down the track Jack could hear the creek rushing and roaring along far beyond its banks, booming and eddying nearly a mile wide. The water near the edge was comparatively calm, but out in the channel the current, marked by driftwood, was dash-ing and foaming furiously.

The trestle work of the bridge was out of sight.

Jack stopped. It was growing dark. Through a rift in the clouds the sun had set red, and the reflection made the creek more horrible. Here and there a tall sycamore trembled in the water, white in the rapidly deepening dusk.

Of course to attempt to cross was folly. Suppose the Philos did lose—what then? What did it really matter? Then he seemed to hear the shouts of the victorious Linos—Guthridge's triumphant cheer—and to see his own society sitting crushed and silent.

He would try it.

He looked back for a moment at the station and the light dying in the west behind it. Then he tightened his grasp on his cane, the pride of his junior's heart, and stepping upon the stringers at the side of the track he began.

The water was an inch, then ankle deep and icy cold. He could scarcely see the ties, but he felt with his cane along the edge of the beam.

Farther out the track sloped and the water deepened. Jack could not see the stringers, but he felt for each step carefully. It was growing so dark he could not see the farther shore. He did not dare look up or down the creek, and the whirl of the water made him dizzy.

Suddenly the water became knee deep with the sagging of the old bridge, and he entered the channel. The current nearly swept him off his feet. He stood still, heartily repenting the foolhardy undertaking. To return was impossible.

Two steps more. The roar of the black water grew deafening; took possession of him. Jack looked upstream. A huge dim mass was floating swiftly down the creek. It was a section of a covered bridge. It swayed toward one shore, then toward the other, with a horrible drunken reel. The boy reeled, too, stumbled, and the cane was swept beyond his reach instantly. He fell on his hands and knees, and there clung to the beam, the water surging to his neck.

He got his head again presently. He caught a glimpse of a few lights here and there in the town. The roar of the river dashing on into the night drowned his voice. He closed his eyes and waited.

The floating section of the bridge seemed hours coming. He thought of the warm dining room at home and his mother's face above the teacups. He could see the debating hall through a luminous mist. He wondered if Halstead would speak in his place.

He was growing numb with the chill of the water. The river seemed to whirl and rock about him. Then there was a noise like thunder. The bridge had struck the trestle. A wave swept over him. The trestle trembled, swayed, the bridge floated broadside, then struck again. The trestle tottered, wavered, then the bridge settled against it and was stationary, and as Jack mechanically crawled on again he knew that the trestle would hold.

Meantime in the debating hall the debate on "Resolved, That strikes are justifiable," had begun. Guthridge had mounted the rostrum amid the cheers of his society, while the Philos were giving Gardner advice enough to have driven 10 men mad.

Guthridge had demolished one by one the hopes of the opposition. Every Philo was silent. Gardner went hot, then cold, by turns. It was in vain for him to answer Guthridge.

The brilliant speech drew to a close.

"Strike till the last armed foe expires," shouted Guthridge, waving his arms madly. "Strike for your altars and your fires. Strike for the green graves of your sires! There are strikes!"

He broke off silently. Every Philo was on his feet cheering like mad. Four times the college yell rang out like a battlecry. Four times, and then the crowd parted. There in their midst, panting with the quick run from the bridge, his eyes ablaze with excitement and his figure disguised in a suit of Halstead's old clothes, stood Jack.

Of course the Philos won, and everybody remembers how all the class cheered when the class historian on class day, a fortnight later, told what Jack dared and did for the glory of the Philos! Ruth Prescott in Washington News.

The worship of ugliness.

The worship of ugliness in material things explains a great deal in shop windows that would otherwise be puzzling. Hundreds of tasteless so-called art objects are displayed, because it has been discovered that they will sell. One of the richest shops in New York, and indeed in all the world, includes, among a multitude of beautiful things, many large and costly objects that, tried by any known canon of taste, are ugly. The salesmen who have these things in charge apologize for them to persons of taste, but there are people in New York and elsewhere who give hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars for these confessedly ugly things.—New York Sun.

More Critical.

The Wife (sobbing)—You're cr-rueful to make fun of this hat. I had one like it before we were married, and you said it was l-lovely.

The Husband—In those days I didn't look at the hat, but what was under it.—Chicago Record.

His Age.

A broker, whose mind was full of stock quotations, was asked a few days since how old his father was. "Well," said he abstractly, "the old gentleman is quoted at 80, but there is every prospect he will reach par."—Journal of Education.

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