MINDS MELLOW AND MOODY.

Half Hours With the Melancholy Wits of the Country.

THE TOO FRESH TOBOGGANER.

The Widow and the Widower on a Narrow Road—Poems on Passion and Bonnets—A Select Assortment of Smiles.

The Too Fresh Tobogganer.

From the Montreal Star.

[He calleth for his lady love.]

The lanterns are shining, my love, my dove,
Away to the slide let's be jogging;
For a ride I am pining, my dove, my love,
And I've brought out my little toboggan;
So put on your blanket coat quick as may be,
And come to the slide and toboggan with me,
Come, ride on my little toboggan.

The north wind is blowing, my love, my dove,
It is splendid tobogganing weather;
So let us be going, my dove, my love,
And slide and toboggan together.
Oh, hasten my peerless one, off let us jog,
And dash down the slide on my little tobog.
Dash down on my little toboggan.

[They sally forth and reach the slide.]

At last off we're whizzing, my love, my dove,
And down the steep slide we are dashing;
Hear the air pass us hzzing, my dove, my love,
As on we go slashing and crashing.
We're nearing the bottom; aha! we are there—
* * * * * * *
But where's my toboggan, and where are you, dear?
Where's my love and my little toboggan?

[Emerges from snow heap and gazes wildly around.]

What can have occurred, my love, my dove,
With something I must have collided;
I must have been flurried, my dove, my love,
And must have unskillfully guided,
My vehicle made from the bark of a log,
My little toboggan, my little tobog—
But where the deuce is my toboggan?

Ah! now I espy you, my love, my dove,
But who in the mischief's that feller
Who walks so close by you, my dove, my love?
It's that brute of a clerk—that teller.
Ah! woe me unhappy! now homeward I'll jog,
For my love I have lost, and my little tobog;
Yes, all smashed is my little toboggan.

MORAL.

Young fellows give ear; ere you go to the slide
With your girl, learn to steer, for a duffer
No lady can care for, and if you can't guide
Your toboggan, you'll certainly suffer.
As my hero above, whose unskillfulness cost
Him the loss of his girl, and beside her he lost—
He lost, ah! his little toboggan.

After They Found Out.

Detroit Free Press: A Detroiter who was driving out on the Holden road the other day came to a spot where the snow had badly drifted on each side of the track just as a woman driving a horse and "pung" entered the other end of the cut. As both held to the road their horses soon came head on and stopped.

"Why didn't you turn out?" shouted the man.

"Why didn't you?" replied the woman.

"I've got seven miles to drive, but I'll stay here all winter before I'll turn out!"

"And I've got five dozen eggs here, and I'll let them freeze as hard as rocks before I'll give an inch!"

The man dropped the lines, lighted a cigar and leaned back on his seat. The woman dropped her lines, lighted her pipe and wrapped the old buffalo robe around her feet. Thus they sat for eight minutes, when the man grew impatient and called:

"What's the price of hogs out your way?"

"Oh, you've got all the pork you want in your sleigh!" she answered.

"I'm glad I'm a widower!"

"I'm glad I'm a widder!"

"Eh? Are you a widow?"

"Sartin, and I own 225 acres of the best land in Greenfield. So you are a widower?"

"Yes'm. Madam, pray excuse me. I'll cheerfully turn out.

"Oh, don't mention it. I'm perfectly willing to haul into the snowbank."

"Ah! madam, allow me to hope that you will overlook my"—

"Oh, certainly. Fine weather, but rather cold. Good by."

"Good by, madam. Hope you a safe journey."

Boarding House Grammar.

The nice, new dairy butter, direct from the creamery, which the landlady had told them about, was on the table, and Chumpley tried it. Then he peered under the plate and all about it for a moment or two.

"Mr. Chumpley," said the landlady, very severely, "will you please parse the butter this way?"

"I should prefer," answered Chumpley, in his meekest tones, "to decline it in my own way."

Poems of Passion.

St. Louis Wasp.

O, the wild, wild night when the tempest roars
And the sea-birds screech on high!
And the breakers beat on the sounding shores
And echo along the sky!
When the jimjam bird and the flamaloo
Hear the sudden slough of the sea,
I harness a whale and drive to you,
And I hold you on my knee!

I harness a whale of the whaleful kind,
And my cart rides on coral wheels,
And I skim the brine, and the sighing wind
Around and above me reels;
O, the sad, sad sea and the wide, white whale
Seems ever too slow for me!
But if I must ride on a splintered rail,
My darling, I go to thee!

O, the whale is slow and the wheels need oil,
And the shark express goes by,
And they leave the sea for the sandy soil,
And the foam for the darkened sky;
And my whale is old and his teeth are gone,
And he's lost his way in the sea,
But if I must put my cart in pawn,
My darling, I come to thee!

The Learned Sister.

San Francisco Post: Lady Lawyer (to witness)—You have been an intimate friend of the family, haven't you?

"Yes."

"You have seen the defendant here ill use his——"

He Lawyer—I object. The question is improper.

The Court—Objection sustained.

Lady Lawyer—Haven't you seen the defendant——

He Lawyer—Ibjec; same ground.

The Court—Same ruling.

Lady Lawyer—Well, then, what I want to know is hasn't his wife, my client, been shamefully ill——

He Lawyer—Ibjec.

Court—Jection stained.

Lady Lawyer—Please state, then what you know about the cruelty of the man to——

He Lawyer—Ibjec.

Court—Same ruling. Ask the witness, madam, to tell what he knows.

Lady Lawyer—Well, that's what I'm doing! Now, sir, tell us what you know.

Witness—About what?

Lady Lawyer—Why, about the cruelty——

He Lawyer—Ibjec.

The Court—Jection stained. No more of this, madam.

Lady Lawyer—Very well. Now, then, witness, tell us what you know.

Witness—Ask me questions and I'll answer 'em.

Lady Lawyer—Why, just tell us how you have seen him abuse—Oh, dear me, I forgot. Well, tell us—Oh, Judge (breaking down in tears), he knows perfectly well what I want him to say!

The Court—Recess for half an hour. Our learned sister can employ the time in composing herself.

Playing Lunatic Asylum in the Parlor

The small boy who had been watching through a stovepipe hole the antics of a loving couple, ran down to the kitchen in high glee to describe the whole proceeding to his little sister.

"Oh, it's such fun, 'said he, in conclusion.

"What is such fun?" asked his mother, who had just entered.

"Why, to play lunatic asylum like Sister Bertie and Mr. Snips are doing in the parlor."

A New College Degree.

A pompous gentleman of this city was recently approached by a friend who greeted him with outstretched hand and a pleasing smile:

"Let me congratulate you," he cried; "your college has given you a degree."

"How—what!" said the other. "I haven't seen anything of it. What is it?"

"They have made you an L. G. G."

"No, really, have they? An L. G.G. Let me see, that is—"

"Let 'er go, Gallagher."

They haven't spoken to each other since.

A Supplication to Bonnets.

Stand not upon the order of your going off, but go off at once.
Each bonnet is a love and love is kind,
And at our plea naught that is kind will scoff,
Hence we beseech you, we who sit behind—
O, bonnets, get you down, come off, come off!

The deep damnation of a taking off
Moved Shakespeare's wrath; but now the public rage
'Gainst the damnation of your staying on,
Ye loves of bonnets that shut out the stage!

O fall to beauty's lap—in cloak room stay—
Be floored—be tabled—take a bed—a chair—
Or like the flowers sang by Thomas Gray,
Waste your tall sweetness on the desert air!

Let Dundee bonnie, if she feel that way,
"Up with the bonnets" sing—we shall not frown
If but at concert, opera and play
All other bonnets will but sweetly down!

The prayer of Ajax fits our lips aflame,
As high your blooming barricades do soar,
From the old hero rang the fierce exclaim—
"Give me to see and Ajax asks no more."

The Widow's Mortgages.

Wall Street News: "Let's see," he mused, as he softly pulled at his ear, "your name is Johnson, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You married a widow over at Turkey Bend who had $20,000 in mortgages?"

"I married a widder."

"And the mortgages?"

"Were on the widder's property, gosh hang it; I'm up here now to see if false teeth is a ground for divorce."

Palmistry.

"Will you favor me with your hand?" he said softly.

"Oh, George!" she exclaimed, blushing becomingly; "this is so sudden. Really, I hardly know what to say."

"I am very deeply interested in palmistry, you know," he explained.

And he never could understand why she left the room with such a display of temper.

There She Had Him.

He hadn't quite come up to her standard and she refused his escort to the picnic. He said:

"Why, you're as full of airs as a hand-organ to-day."

"Maybe I am," she tossed out. "Anyhow I don't go with a crank."

The Use of High Bonnets.

Chicago Rambler: Manager: Going to have a good house, John?

Box Office Man: I'm afraid not.

Manager: H'm! That's bad! Company never does good work to a poor house, and all the critics will be there. Well, put all the women who come for seats in the front row.

Box Office Man: What for?

Manager: Well, with a double purpose: To hide the empty seats from the company, and the company from the critics.

One From the Realms of Faro.

Chicago Herald: "I don't play poker very much," said a Clark street habitue, "but faro—that's where I live. I was way out west one time, and they had a little snap faro game running. I was flat broke. Finally I said to the dealer: 'Mr. Dealer, will you take collateral?'

"'Take anything,' says he.

"I put a silk umbrella on the ace. One turn out of the box and two aces showed up—a split. The dealer never cracked a smile, but taking in my umbrella, reached over and put a parasol on the ace."

The Height of Fashion.

Lo! the poor woman whose unbalanced mind makes her wear hats like this to tease mankind who tries to view the play, but gazes at this pyramid, which fashion calls a hat A woman's "headstrong," yet this hat's great weight must surely crush her soft and yielding pate. She is "light" headed, too, and maybe that is why she gets extinguished by this hat. Perhaps she wears this funnel we abhor to make the men look up to her the more but, if her head was "level" she would know that hats as high as this are very "low." We pity her who needs a lofty hat to lift her head which otherwise is "flat." Without this hat we can't see through her quite, but with it she's more puzzling—and a" tright."

Alas, alas! we men who foot the bills know womens's hats come "high" like other ills, but when they're high as this we've got to strike, until they "shoot the hat" we so dislike.

He Was Qualified.

Chicago Rambler: "Well, sir," remarked the Kansas apothecary to the applicant for a position, "what have you to say for yourself? Can you mix prescriptions?"

"No, sir," was the prompt reply, "but I tended a cigar store for two years and worked for a while in a wholesale liquor house."

"Well, you'll do. You can relieve me of about nine-tenths of my work."

He Pays License on a Dog.

Detroit Free Press: "I like to ask you if dere vhas some license to keep a dog?" inquirer Mr. Dunder, as he carefully tiptoed in the presence of Sergeant Randall yesterday.

"Yes, sir, there is."

"Who gets him?"

"You have to go up stairs to the office of the city clerk."

"Doan' somepody come to me after him?"

"No, sir."

"Vhell, dot vhas curious. Last week Shake goes oudt mit Mount Glemens to see his aunt, und he prings him home a dog. Me keep him tied oop mit der pack yard, und he vhas home only one day when a man walks into my place und says vhas I Carl Dunder? I vhas. All right. He like to get dot license on Shake's dog. Der regular price vhas $1, but he make it seex shillings, pecause it vhas hardt times."

"And you paid?"

"Vhell, I doan' like to haf dot dog kilt, you see? Eaferypody says he vhas sooch a dog ash shmelts some tiger or lion two miles avhay. Next day a stranger comes in with a shmall pook in his hand, und a pencil oafer his ear. Vhas I Carl Dunder. I vhas. All right. He like to get dot license on Shake's dog. If I paid him to somepody else dot vhas nothings mit him. He vhas a friend to Shake, howefer, und he makes it feefty cents."

"And you paid that?"

"Vhell, sergeant, dot vhas a good dog. If some burglars vhas a mile away he howls und wakes us oop und saves us $2,000. Dis morning a stranger comes in. He haf some badge on. Vhas I Carl Dunder? I vhas. He likes to get dot license for Shake's dog. If I pay somepody else I vhas a fool. Nopody can collect dot license onless he haf dot badge on. Being as I vhas swindled he make it 25 cents."

"And you were fool enough to pay?"

"Vhell, sergeant, I pays taxes in two wards, und I vhas headquarters for campaign clubs. Dot dog vhas great on 'coons' und elephants. Vhas it some shwindle on me?"

"Certainly it was! You ought to be sent to an asylum!"

"Sergeant, look at my eye, und doan' you forget him! I vhas going home. Somepody vhill come in. Vhas I Carl Dunder? I vhas. All right. Sergeant, I shall shump on dot person like a sparrow on an elephant. I vhill preak him in two und drag him aroundt und bang his headt mit dem floor until der coroner finds only one ear und a shirt button to hold an inquest on! Good pye! After I vhas in shall come und see me sometimes, for I vhas an honest man who has to defend my family.

CALIFORNIAN SKETCHES.

All Europeans are interested in at least three things in the United States; in Niagara because of its water; in Salt Lake City because of ist Mormons, and in California because of its gold. At this moment two leading reviews of the old world are entertaining their readers with Californian sketches. Herr E. Reyer in the Deutsche Rundschau of Berlin, and M. de Varigny in the Revue des Deux-Mondes of Paris, are depicting in a most entertaining manner scenes on the Pacific slope.

The December number of the German magazine contains three pictures of California life. In the first, Herr Reyer gives a detailed and instructive description of the hydraulic gold washing of Nevada county, "one of the most original and grandest mechanical creations of recent years." He then dwells on the struggle between the miners and farmers, and tells how the former had the upper hand during nearly a whole generation, but how the latter finally went before the courts and asked that their fields be protected against the damage occasioned by the mining interests of the mountainous regions. Herr Reyer examines the proposition of Mr. Hall, the engineer, who advocates the construction of dams in the valleys which will retain the sand discharged on to the farming lands through the gold washing process. But the German writer takes ground against this plan. He thinks that these dams will offer only temporary relief, and believes that it will require large sums of money to keep them in repair. He proposes the levying of a special tax on the faimers and the miners, and the negotiation of a special loan, which money is then to be spent in improving the river beds. He would next limit the amount of washing to the point where the streams would be able to carry off naturally the sand thrown into them. By this means Herr Reyer believes that the two interests could be conciliated, and the miners in the mountains and the farmers in the lowlands be on friendly terms again.

Herr Reyer then takes up the period when gold was discovered in California and dwells on the development of mining interests in the Sierras. During his wanderings about in those regions, he came to the works on Mill creek where he met with three remarkable specimens of "pioneers of civilization," as he calls them. He says that he spent several agreeable days with them and thus got an insight into their modes of life. One of his hosts gave him this picture of their existence: "In Europe a man is contented to die in the same place where he was born, after having led a humdrum existence devoid of all excitement. Here, on the contrary, a healthy discontent reigns. We are striving after influence and wealth, not simply to enjoy the riches, but because this struggle is agreeable to us. We could not endure the prosaic inactivity of civilization. To-day we are up, to-morrow we are down, and the falling is as exciting as the rising."

Further on, the author relates his excursion to the mountain city of Bodie, which he describes as being now an insignificent place of a few hundred inhabitants, after having been, for a time, a most flourishing town. He says that the gold interests of Bodie were managed in the most reckless manner, that the miners gained immense sums one day, and spent them the next. In 1877, according to our German authority, the Bodie mines were quoted on the stock exchange for a few months at some two millions of dollars. But their value fell as rapidly as it had risen, and in 1883 you could buy all the stock for less than $8,000. Herr Reyer then goes on to say: "Many other rich mines shrunk up in America in this same way, which circumstance cannot be too severely blamed and deplored. Mines like those of Bodie have been profitable for a season, and they might have been made to yield even more if they had been properly managed. But the fabulous dividends that are declared invite competition, and enormously expensive enterprises are undertaken, which swamp the companies and kill the mine. Such great outlays would never be made if people were not worked up to a fever-heat of expectation by the tremendous dividends paid by this or that mining company. But it is the stock speculators who gain by this system at the expense of the mines themselves. As long as this continues, mining interests will suffer. Herr Reyer thinks that the state ought to intervene and protect the mines by putting a check on these stock speculations, but he considers it vain to hope that the American will ever accept an economic measure which in any way limits his personal liberty.

A BEAR ON A WALKING BEAM.

One of the Passengers Brought from Alaska by a Government Vessel.

Portland Oregonian: When the government lightnouse tender Manzanita returned from her Alaskan voyage, she brought one more passenger than she started with. The passenger was a little black bear cub Sallie, which actually hugged her way to the hearts of all on board. Being constantly with the men and at the same time being allowed at will all over the vessel, she very quickly became tame and gentle as a kitten, and quite as playful. The one place where she was not allowed was the engine room, and this not because the chief did not like her, but because he was afraid she might get hurt. The other day Sallie was missed at dinner time, and one of the men volunteered to find her, when, after a long search, she was found perched on the walking beam of the engine, which was in motion. There she clung, and at every movement of the great beam she was raised to within six inches of the ceiling, and her little fat body compressed to a corresponding thinness, but she never made a whimper, too much frightened to jump off, and knowing if she made a noise she would be whipped, so there she clung, alternately getting a breath, and the next moment losing it in a rather violent manner.

The moment she was safe in the man's arms she hugged him tight, and began to squeal and make a tremendous row, behaving in this manner like others of her sex. Among the many tricks she plays is one of stealing quietly up to the cabin door, raising on her hind feet, giving the door a sound whack with one of her paws, and, grabbing the knob, almost shake the door from its hinges; the second she hears a footstep away she goes scampering aft.

A distressing cough may be alleviated and sore throat, hoarseness and bronchal affections promptly cured by a few doses of Dr. J. H. McLean's Tar Wine Lung Balm. 25 cents a bottle.

PERSONAL TRAITS OF VANITY

Some Peculiarities of Great Men and Women.

SCOTCH PHRASE "UNCO GUDE"

Justified in All Ages—Special Conceits—Men's Hatred of Praise of Others—Special Forms of Self-Consciousness.

Alta California: Nothing is more interesting than the weakness of the strong. Men gaze with awe and admiration at persons who have reared themselves above the surroungging level; but the gazers are always pleased by the indications of a common humanity. It is probably true that great men are esteemed for their faults quite as much as for their virtues. Alcibiades attracts more affection than Draco. Washington is revered as is no other American, but other Americans have been more loved. The reason is plain. It is instantly suggested in the excuse given by the Athenian for his prejudice against Aristides. He was tired of hearing him called "The Just." Others were tired, too, and hence the famous ostracism.

The Scotch phrase about the "unco gude" finds justification in all ages. In a narrow acceptation it inculcates the wisdom of pleasing mankind by conformity with the average level. The majority hate to hear of a man being much better than his fellows. He who is his own worst enemy, as the facile saying puts it, has likewise usually plenty of friends. But all this is aside from our present purpose.

The special form of weakness with which we are now dealing is self-conceit, or, as Mr. Justin Morrill, the author, calls it, self-consciousness. It is plain, of course, that there are diverse forms of weakness, and as clear that self-consciousness is betrayed in numerous manifestations. There is the weakness that we call amiable and the weakness that we find odious. Men may be popular not only in spite of, but as we have seen, because of the first; they are invariably made unpopular by the last. With this fact in view, Mr. Morrill's queer book may at first evoke in most readers a kind of despair. They will naturally say that if the greatest of the earth cannot avoid the expression of self-love how is it to be with common mortals?

The case is, however, not so desperate as it seems; for, apart from the discrimination to be justly noted as between the mental and moral qualities, and the circumstance, illustrated in every-day life, that a man may be distinguished and modest or obscure and arrogant, the patent facts of history rise like monuments to remind and reassure us. If there have been Napoleons, there have been Grants. But let us put together some of the most remarkable bits of egotism recorded in Mr. Morrill's pages of some of the most remarkable persons. To this end we have selected the following group:

SPECIAL CONCEITS OF THE GREAT.

Napoleon the Great—One of Napoleon's marshals handed to the emperor a book from an upper shelf with the remark, "I am higher than you, sire." "Longer, not higher," responded Napoleon.

"In my council," he said another time, "there were men possessed of much more eloquence than I was, but I always defeated them by this simple argument—two and two make four."

"After all, what have I done?" he asked, on a third occasion, "Is it anything compared with what Christ has done?" "They call me lucky," Metternich reports him to have said, "because I am able; it is the weak men who accuse the strong of good fortune."

When his sisters sought honors as due to their relationship Napoleon curtly said to them, "One would think from your pretentions, ladies, that we had inherited the crown from our father."

Napoleon the Little—Louis Napoleon fancied himself a great general. He was with great difficulty dissuaded from taking the command of the French army in the Crimean war. At Plombieres he said to Count Cavour, "Do you know there are but three men in all Europe? One is myself, the second is you and the third is one whose name [Bismarck, no doubt] I will not mention."

Daniel Webster, the great expounder of the American constitution, was, in general, too well poised to show vanity, whatever he might feel. He, however, wrote early to his father, saying: "I feel a prompting within me that tells me there is something better for me than to be a clerk of court. My mind is made up."

On another occasion, being in court, he was reminded that he was assailing a dictum of Lord Camden's. He turned to the judge and owned it, but added: "But, may it please your honor, I differ from Lord Camden."

Thomas Jefferson calmly observed (of persons interested in the study of legislation and the like): "They will find that the leading and most important laws of that day were prepared by myself and carried chiefly by my efforts, supported, indeed, by able and faithful coadjutors, * * * very effective as seconds, but who would not have taken the field as leaders."

Lord Byron, according to Leigh Hunt, the poet, angrily returned a box of pills to an apothecary because the package was directed to Mr. Byron instead of Lord Byron. He added: "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." "I am like the tiger," he declared, "if I miss the first spring, I go grumbling back to my jungle; but if I do it it is crashing." On another occasion he wrote to Moore, 1817, and after saying that he did not think literature his vocation, added: "But you will see that I will do something or other—the time and fortune permitting—that, like the cosmogony or creation of the world, will puzzle the philosophers of all ages." It is believed that he thought to achieve military success and become king of Greece.

MARGARET FULLER.

This remarkable woman was reported to have said (when quite young), happily: "I have now met all the intellects of this country, and find none compared to my own." It should be a consolation that an English woman, Frances Anne Kemble, has said things almost as vain.

Nathaniel Hawthorne—This eminent man had his share of pride, but it was sometimes the pride that apes humility, as when he says in the preface to "Twice Told Tales:" "The author has a claim to one distinction which, as none of his literary brethren will care about disputing it with him, he must not be afraid to mention. He was for a good many years the obscurest man of letters in America."

Dr. Samuel Johnson—The great lexicographer said innumerable egotistical things. One of them was about the "Rambler." "My other works," he said, "are wine and water, but my 'Rambler' is pure wine." The world, as Mr. Morrill observes, has thought differently.

Once Johnson called out at a club with lofty exultation: "Oh, I must tell you, gentlemen, a very great thing! The empress of Russia has ordered the 'Rambler' to be translated into the Russian language, so I shall be read on the banks of the Wolga. Horace boasts that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone; now, the Wolga is further from me than the Rhone was from Horace," etc.

Oliver Goldsmith—This admirable writer is said to have been jealous of beauty even in the other sex. When the people of Amsterdam gathered round a balcony to look at the Misses Hornecks he grew impatient and said peevishly, "There are places where I also am admired." Dr. Johnson, who, like most monologists, hated to hear other people converse, said of Goldsmith, it will be remembered, that he wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll. It is one of the oddest among our anecdotes of egotism in high places, that a man so uncommonly ugly as Goldsmith, should have piqued himself as described on his personal appearance.

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

Actors are of course, although no more than singers, among the vainest of men. Macready, actually wrote of his own playing of "Macbeth," that it was a noble piece of art.

Edwin Forrest, the American tragedian, was more wary of self-praise. Here, however, is an anecdote not given by Mr. Morrill, and which we have never seen in print. Some sycophant said to him: "Why, Forrest, you're not an actor—you're an institution." Forrest liked at times to repeat the pleasant saying.

Whatever else may be the lesson conveyed by these interesting extracts they certainly enforce a valuable lesson of modesty. The lesson is needed by nine out of ten of us. A little reflection will bring home to the most sensible men and women the truth that they habitually sin, some more, of course, some less, in the way of petty vanity. That reflection will as certainly convince such persons that they not only offend others, but inflict a grave injury upon themselves by such an exhibition. For our self-love ever wounds the self-love of others, and vanity is the dry-rot of the soul.

A suggestion or two to those who so far recognize the mischief indicated as to be willing to make an effort to avoid it here is not out of place. People are always in greatest danger of committing sins of vanity in their own families or among others generally who are dependent upon them. This for reasons almost too palpable to repeat. The sinners know their hearers must submit to their egotism, and habit leads always to increased indulgence. We may add that a man may do well to distrust himself who falls into the way of prefacing his speech by saying, "Vanity apart, I think so and so," or "Without meaning to be egotistical, my opinion is," etc.

Undeniably there is peril that in avoiding Scylla we stumble on Charybdis. Shall a man who knows his own powers, is conscious of his strong grasp of a given subject, feels that he has gone through the mill of a hard experience, put his candle under a bushel and hold his peace? We say no; but even a just self-assertion may be modestly put and so gain the true end of all human action, which is, through all the grinds and attritions and qualification of circumstances, to do more good than harm.

NIXIE.

Nobody would take little Nixie Markham for a herome, nor would one suppose that little quiet figure possessed nerve enough to save hundreds of lives by her prompt action, but this was the way of it: It was a hot summer afternoon, and the most absolute quiet reigned over the little railroad station of Parkerstown, up in northern New England, on these sweltering July days. Not even the customary loafers were around, and only at train time was there any show of life.

The down-train was due at 5:10, but until then, as the sensational writers say, "all was quiet as the grave."

Nixie was the station agent's daughter and only child. She was fifteen, although so small she looked three years younger, and was usually quiet as a mouse—"not much zip to her," as the country folks said. In spite of the current opinion, however, she had, except the small portion of time which the little country town set apart for the school season, spent nearly all her time in the ticket office with her father, picking up letter by letter and word by word, the sounds of the Morse instrument; and, finally, one day she astonished her father by taking a telegram by sound, giving him a neat "copy."

From that day Nixie was installed as telegraph operator, and the indulgent father said "Nixie could run that office jest as well as he could himself"—which, considering that Mr. Markham was considered by the boys "a plug operator," might be called a doubtful compliment to Nixie.

Well, this particular afternoon we are talking about, the aforesaid "plug" sauntered into the depot with trouble enthroned on his majestic brow.

"Nick, I'm summoned on a jury case up in Centre Village this afternoon. It's too late to get anybody here, even s'posing there was anybody to get. What are we going to do about it? S'pose you can 'tend the concern alone until I get back—probably by 6?"

"I guess so, father," replied Nixie. "There won't be much of anything to do. Likely there won't be many passengers for the down train this hot day, and I hope I know enough to sell a ticket or two if there are."

"Well, see that those boxes go by express. The waybills are ready and in the drawer—guess you'll get along all right"—and off he went, leaving Nixie mistress of the situation—which phrase meant more than you might imagine, that very particular day.

At first she felt her newly-acquired importance somewhat and stepped briskly around, dusting the musty little office and watering the few plants in the window, but there being absolutely nothing to do and no one coming near, she dropped into inactivity and listened to the click of the telegraph instrument, which to her was as companionable as the talk of near friends would be. As the afternoon passed drowsily along the heat and stillness overcame her, and dropping her flaxen head on the desk before her, she was soon—as one of the good ladies of Parkerstown was wont to express it—"in the arms of Morphine."

Afterwards, the first thing she could remember about it, a voice seeming to come from her dreams said: "'Taint likely she is left alone, and asleep, too."

"No," responded another evil voice, "the old man's probably 'round somewhere—but," in a lower tone, "come on, let's go 'long. The down train 'll be along and we'll just lay 'em out."

Nixie was wide awake enough now, but she had presence of mind in her small body, and realized that safety lay in keeping still.

"How fur is it up there?"

"Sh! Keep mum. Do you want to knock the hull thing in the head, and yourself too?" And then the girl's quickened hearing caught the sound of heavy footsteps passing by the window and on up the track.

Nixie waited until she couldn't hear the footsteps and then cautiously turned and looked out of the window. There they were—two miserable-looking tramps hastening up the track. She recognized them at once as two men who had been discharged from a construction train that had been at work down the road. What should she do? O, if she could only send for her father! But there was no one anywhere near, and, besides, by the time he could get home it might be too late—for it was evident the desperate wretches were bent upon revenging themselves of their fancied wrongs upon the innocent. She looked at the clock. Half past four! She ran out and looked around the lonely station. She called once, feebly, but what was the use? If she sent for her father she had no tangible explanation to give or real reason to make him hurry home—only she was sure there was harm coming to the down train—that long crowded express filled with mountain tourists. But she must do something.

The men had disappeared around a slight bend in the track. Nixie ran in, locked up the office, snatched a hat from a nail in the corner and then hurried up the track until she arrived at the slight curve. Then she "made haste more slowly" for there were the men. Stepping behind a clump of bushes she watched them. They had stopped and were doing something, she could not at first see what, to the track. Pretty soon up came a rail, and in a minute more it was thrown down a steep ledge within four feet of the track—where the whole train must be precipitated in less than an hour if something could not be done to warn them. Nixie saw it all now, and for a moment stood, her eyes dilated with horror, while she saw the scoundrels shake their fists toward her way and heard an imprecation. Then they passed on and Nixie, growing cold in the sudden extremity, turned and sped toward the depot.

The rail had been removed on a curve which was shaded on the west side by a high bank so that at half past five it was quite dusk there, and as the train always came in on a down grade they came at full speed. So Nixie thought to herself, "I'm so glad I came, for now I'll hurry and telegraph to Stratford before the train comes by, and then we'll see, Mr. Tramps, how your little scheme comes out."

She reached the office and looked at the clock. Five minutes to five! and the train left Stratford at 5:03. Well, eight minutes was more than plenty of time if she could "raise" Stratford. She grasped the key. "Sd-sd-sd," clicked the instrument. Never before was there so impatient an operator on that line. With her eyes on the clock, which seemed then, if ever, to say "forever—never—never—forever," she kept up the call. Somebody on the other side "broke her" twice, but she gave all the danger signals she could think of and kept on. The moments kept on—one, two, three, four, five—slowly pealed the old clock—each stroke an agony to the girl.

Meanwhile the agent at Stratford could not operate at all, and the boy who served as general chore-boy about the place, had gone for the cows, and there was no one to answer the call upon which so much depended.

A few minutes and it was too late, and Nixie was in a new dilemma.

Nixie closed the key in despair. She did not know the train signals, but seized the red flag under the old desk and ran for dear life—literally the dear life of her fellow-creatures. Not until she got to the wrecked place did she remember that she must go beyond the curve to stop them or she would be of no use. Already she heard the approaching train rumble in the distance. Faster, faster she sped round the curve straight on up the track. She could see them now coming in. On they rushed, the great engine bent on destroying its precious freight. Nixie stopped in the midst of the track and frantically swung her red flag, but still the monster rushed toward her, showing no abatement of speed.

Meanwhile the engineer and firemen had seen the slight form of the girl and the fireman stood aghast to see the engineer so utterly regardless of her.

"Stop, man!" he shouted; "don't you see the girl?"

"Yes," said the half-drunk engineer. "Why don't the little fool get out of my way? I'll teach her," and made no movement to stop.

Nixie waited with sinking heart—O, why did everything go against her? Was it the will of God that this dreadful thing must happen? The engine was close upon her and she ran upon a jutting rock still waving her scarlet flag—but just as the engine was alongside of her she heard the sharp click of the call-bell in the engine and saw the fireman push the engineer aside and reverse the engine. The conductor, who had just seen her and excitedly pulled the bell-rope, jumped off and came toward her. But the reaction was too much for poor Nixie, and she could only gasp out: "Round the curve," and then she was a white heap, with no sense of anything.

Passengers rushed out, and, after some had been to the curve and seen what the little girl had saved them from, no lady in the land could be so loyally wanted upon as she was when she had been lifted into the car and told modestly her little story. It was some little time before the track was ready for the train to proceed, and, when Nixie got out at her own station, many kind hands pressed hers in farewell, and the conductor left something in her hand, too, just as the train left, saying: "You are the bravest little woman in the state."

Not until she had been in the office a good half hour with her father, who had got home from his lawsuit and wondered what made the train late and where Nixie had gone to, and told him all the story, did Nixie think to look at the packet. Then she read a note: "Will Miss Eunice Markham accept the accompanying from the friends she so bravely saved August 23, 1880?"

The note was wrapped around $500 in bank notes.

"O, papa! now you can pay off the mortgage on the house," cried Nixie, and the father said:

"I declare Nick, you get higher wages as agent than I do?"

The superintendent of the Q. & L. railroad company came down to Parkerstown that week, and soon there was a vacancy in one of the best offices of the company in a neighboring city and Mr. Markham was tendered the situation. He accepted, "so Nixie can have the schooling she wants so much," he said; and to-day Miss Eunice Markham is one of the most promising pupils in the high school of that city. But more than ever is she the pride of her father's heart, who never tires of telling of the afternoon "his girl was station agent."

But, after all, you would never take her for a heroine.

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We also have a few choice lots left in Cotner & Archer's addition. Have sold very rapidly, and are increasing in value every day. People are buying these lots for homes, consequently they will prove a good investment to anybody.

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