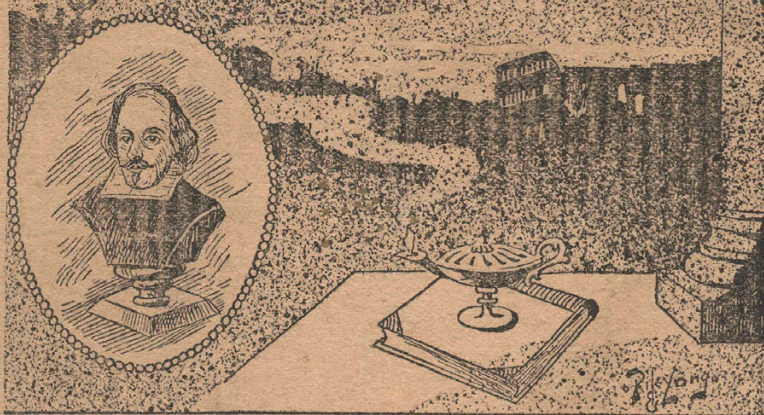


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THE DILETTANTE

A Monthly Literary Magazine.

VOL. I.

NOVEMBER, 1898.

NO. 8

A NIGHT'S LODGING

Contributed.

The particular lodging-house wherein we propose to send the reader abed and asleep through the medium of these pages, stands hard by the depot of one of our great transcontinental railroads, in a far western town. It is an ordinary appearing, barracks-like structure of pine, and from its unusual size and height fearfully suggests the idea of fire and a midnight holocaust. But the windows glow pleasantly with lamps, and the legends calling public attention to the entertainment furnished within shine forth luminously. From time to time the inmates are startled by the mighty tread of the locomotive, and the thunder of the rushing caravan sweeping past the threshold. Feet sound upon the stairs at all hours of the day and night—but mostly at night do the homeless and houseless flock thither. The frequenters of neighboring haunts of vice, the weary emigrant, the tourist fresh from remote and fancy brightened regions—all crowd upon the stair, and leave their tributary coin with the occupant of the little lamplighted office.

The young man who welcomed us was tall and

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grave of aspect, and had an unwholesome pallor that told of the unseasonable hours of his watch. There was a shrewd look of intelligence, however, in the wan eyes, that implied a varied acquaintance with human nature, and his voice was soft and pleasing. We made known our errand: he motioned us to be seated, and we were soon at ease with our singular young host.

The stairway leading from the street to the lodging apartments is long, and somewhat tortuous, so that a customer could be heard ascending some time before he came to view. From the pavement below came the confused din of tramping feet; but the practiced ear of our host resolved the medley into its integral parts. "There," said he, "there goes a merchant or business man, sleek, smug and successful, and somewhat elderly. That swift weighty step betrays the young man rejoicing in his strength. There goes the pleasure-seeker, light-footed, light of heart and brain. There goes a policeman, and that is 'the dull heel of the sauntering outcast.' "

Here a shambling, spiritless step sounded upon the stair.

"A laborer, sir," observed the young man. "It is a hopeless step, like his own lot. There's nothing sprightly in it, any more than in his life. He's a slave, sir,—deservedly so perhaps, for I dare say he is improvident and dissipated and ignorant; but it's a hard word to say, that we have slaves still in America. It's the stubborn truth, however. Here comes a slave, sir, wearing his chains. Ignorance is his chain of bondage; uncleanness his badge of slavery. Behold the vaunted freeman of America."

A short, dull-featured laborer appeared at the head of the stairs, paid for an inexpensive cot, and was piloted away to the rear by a little slippered deputy. He was indeed a slave, to all appearances; materially to dull daily toil, and spiritually

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to appetite and lust, and a brutal incapacity to appreciate what is fine and good. "It is hard to believe that influences exist in America calculated to turn out such grades of manhood as that," said the young man.

"It depresses me to reflect that such clods are necessary to carry forward the world's work. But I presume that they are indispensable. As Ruskin so finely says, 'there's gentle work to be done and gentlemen must do it. There's rough work to be done and rough men must do it.' But it's a hard pass that men's souls must become debased and deadened by brutal toil and dissipation—for the one almost invariably follows the other. Violent physical labor is an intemperance, just as all excess is intemperance. One form of intemperance leads to another. It's a hard lot, sir, and hopeless."

While he was speaking an individual appeared at the head of the stairs whom it is difficult to describe. He was arrayed with great simplicity, yet he was plainly not a laborer. Nor yet a clerk or business man, for the eager intelligence of the eyes betokened a state of mind more keenly intellectual. But we were not left long in doubt. The new arrival entered the office, and soon thereafter announced himself to be a German communist; and presently he began to discourse upon the beautiful theory of communism, and the horror of trade and war.

"The time is approaching," he said, "when this system, (communism) must be adopted. The world will shortly become so densely populated that we cannot all exist if one man is permitted to prey upon another under the name of trade—greed were a better word." (Here a listener, a typical merchant, burst hotly out in defense of the honor of trade, and a fierce controversy took place.) "It's greed—unmitigated greed; a strong desire on the dealer's part to seize the property of his neighbors. And as I

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said before, sir, it has got to be stopped as soon as the wilds of the earth are peopled, and no more free lands are to be had by our overflowing population."

Somebody here ventured the suggestion that war and pestilence and disaster will keep the race properly thinned out.

"You are at fault, sir," answered the enthusiast. "The fatality from pestilence is a mere drop in the bucket, and is every year lessening as sanitary matters are improved, and science learns to grapple more effectively with disease. And war, sir," (here the speaker's voice rang sharply out and his eyes blazed) "war is barbarism. It's not the man that fights—it's the beast; the beastly inclinations unbridled and set loose. Don't tell me it's patriotism that sustains the soldier in battle. It's not moral courage; it's the courage of the heated blood: the courage of the bull-dog. Doesn't every soldier say that he trembled when first going into action? That confession, sir, does him credit. It shows that he was originally a man of feeling. I think better of human nature for the soldier's confession—that he trembled with fear. When men become too cowardly to go to war, then, sir, we may hope to see the development of true courage; a kind of courage that shrinks not from the harsh path of duty; that maintains against the sore straits and stress of life a bold and cheerful front." Then followed an exposition of the beautiful doctrines of communism—impracticable of course, and wildly formed, but seeming almost possible and desirable when championed by the enthusiastic speaker.

While the communist was delivering his harangue a number of loiterers happened in to listen. Among them was a countryman of the speaker's—a little dark-visaged, ancient Jew. He was bent and lame and half-crazed with neuralgia and hard drinking.

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Seating himself in the office he forthwith treated us to a choice collection of groans and philosophical observations upon the phenomena of human life. "It's God Almighty's work," he kept repeating, with a persistence recalling the old London shop-keeper's exclamation, "Oh my lungs and liver !" in *David Copperfield*. "Such is life," he observed with a groan, as he enveloped his ugly old countenance in a red bandana handkerchief saturated in arnica. But deepest in his broken mind was seated the horrible image of a man who had cheated him out of two bits. "Two bits !" he exclaimed. "And he said he would pay it back, didn't he ?" (appealing to us, who, it is needless to say, knew nothing of the atrocious circumstance—it having occurred in the remote past). "But he never paid it back" (ferociously). "Two bits !" (groan). "Two bits is two bits;" (an indisputable assertion, and very positively made). "What shall I do ?" (groan). "Two bits !" (the anguish and disgust of the old man as he said this cannot be described). "What shall I do ?" (appealing to us again). "It's God Almighty's work," he concludes at last, as he shambles away to bed and the nightmare horror of his dreams.

When the old Jew had disappeared our attention was attracted to a little thin old man who had been sitting quietly by. He was known about town as the Theorist, from his multifarious and multitudinous theories. His ideas of science and ethics and religion are peculiar, inasmuch as they are nearly always directly opposed to the popular and accepted theories. The flood-gates of his speech being opened, he ran on somewhat in this wise:—

"On these pleasant June evenings I delight to stroll about the streets and contemplate the varied phenomena of the thronging crowds. Everybody goes bounding madly past—all bent on getting nowhere in the shortest possible time. I am the only

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sane person and philosopher amongst them all. saunter about and get the benefit of the cool evening air, and observe the silver crescent of the moon—while the crowds throng to see the tinselled beauties of the theatre, or, entering some brilliantly lighted beer hall, distend themselves with that vile beverage, and wholly forget that there is a possibility for a high and blessed life. In fact, the more I observe the doings of mankind the more I am impelled to believe that our civilization has a decidedly retrograde direction. As a nation we are completely out of breath in our frantic haste to get nowhere. True, we travel forty miles an hour with comparative safety, but we carry with us all our unlovely aches and ills and crotchets, and finding ourselves in a new landscape make haste to mar it with the old sore troubles of humanity. In our haste we have sacrificed tranquillity, and are so far worse off than were our forefathers who traveled *via ox-wagon*."

The Theorist talked himself out at length; the Communist curbed his fiery spirit and flashed upon us from the corner of the room with his strange magnetic eyes. Time wagged its metallic sounding tongue in the heavy silence that ensued; we were dozing in our chairs, when, sudden and appalling, the fire-bells rang out their swift chorus of alarm. It was at that breathlessly silent hour just before daybreak, and the deep-toned bells sounded peculiarly awful and startling. It was like hearing the last trump. We rushed into the streets, and soon found, to our great relief, that the fire, instead of being the final conflagration, was confined to a grocery store and junk-shop. Down the street came the tinkling hose-carts, and soon the flames sullenly subsided under the pelting streams.

It had now grown to a soft twilight, and the morning star hung like a gem in the east; and our experience of the night was as a dream, and the

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strange folk we had met were little more than phantoms of the dead—so obliterating of the midnight fumes are Life and Day. Perchance if all those bilious reformers could but renounce their unwholesome hours, the bright Day would impart to the world a brighter aspect. Too much they contemplate the night side of life.

And as we strolled into the suburbs in the white splendor of the dawn, the strong, sweet air and the subtle earth-scents stifled the last bitter thoughts of the night, and deep in a copse of blossoming plum trees a mellow-throated robin was chanting matins in a real and lusty voice



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SAGE-BRUSH SKETCHES

BY NANCY McLEAN

VIII

The Sage-Brush people have just returned from attending a funeral—the entire community was there, and seldom has grief been more real and sincere. As the readers of these slight sketches are already somewhat acquainted with the young woman who died, and as her story forms a sort of sequel to a former sketch, it deserves a separate paper.

A few months ago a letter was received from Kate Jeffries. It was mailed at Seattle, but no further clew was obtained as to her movements. It was written to her mother, and told little except that she was pitifully homesick, and “between the lines” the fond and anxious mother read poverty and disappointment. Elmer, she said, was away canvassing for a book, only returning at long intervals; it was a dreary life among strangers, though she had found some good friends—still she thought so often of home and felt impelled to write. She thought it probable that they would soon remove to another town—some point which would be nearer Elmer’s canvassing “territory.”

Mrs. Jeffries, after reading the sad little epistle, had a strange sensation of expectancy, not unmingled with dread—and each mail she looked for another letter. She knew it would come, and it did. But this time Kate did not write it, nor send it. It bore the post-mark of another town, and read as follows:—

Dear Madam: Your daughter, from whom I have obtained your name and address, is very ill. Her little babe is now three weeks old, and is thriving fairly. I have only known her a month or less. She is in a room next mine, and I see her several times a day. Of late she has become delirious at

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times. I think you should come to her or send aid. I know her story; but I know, too, from what she has told me, that you have the heart of a mother. Hoping to hear from you, or, better still, see you soon, I remain

Yours Respectfully,

MRS. MARY BATES.

Mrs. Jeffries handed her letter to her husband, saying, "You must help me to get off on the night train;" and he, after a glance at her face, obeyed without question or demur.

Day by day the tidings came. Kate was found to be suffering from a sort of mania, caused by the trouble which had beset her mind during her brief married life. The little babe she believed to be dead or dying: she held it up to her mother, saying, "See, I have brought you my little dead baby." As soon as they could get word to Elmer, the two of them brought Kate and her child home. She did not seem to have any malady except this—her hallucination concerning her babe—and this baffled the local doctors; so while she was still strong enough to travel she was taken to a hospital, or private asylum, where the best of aid was secured. Mrs. Jeffries kept the baby, but its little life was destined to be measured, not even by months, but by days and weeks.

Relieved of this care, her mother sought her side once more, and remained with her until the end. The mental trouble soon disappeared, but her old hereditary foe, consumption, seemed but to await this opportunity to get her firmly in its grasp. She knew nothing of her first visit home, and longed continually to be taken back to die. At last, when all hope of her recovery had to be abandoned, they brought her home again; but this time it was but for a few hours—just as many as it takes to make up a summer day—and so strangely changed and wasted that she seemed but a ghost of the light-

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hearted girl who, only two years ago, had risked all for love's sake.

She did not wish to see any of her old friends, only the home folks. When her sister's little child would have shyly entered the room where she lay on that one day which she so contentedly spent "at home," she hastily drew the coverlet over her face, hiding all but the eyes, which followed the little one's movements with a wistful look.

At nightfall she died. The evening was moonlit, quiet and serene—a summer night never to be forgotten. She suffered no pain, but drowsily remarked, "I think I can go to sleep now," and that was the end.

Elmer Larkin stepped out into the brilliant night, the wish to be alone overcoming all else, even his bodily weariness. He had not slept for two nights and days, and was spent with grief and watching; but he instantly resolved upon a night walk to his home, taking the three-mile road around by the bridge. Perhaps he felt drawn by the sweet and quiet influences of the hour; at any rate he found, as he walked along the familiar way, that the beauty and solemnity of the night appeared to envelop his being, falling upon him and about him like a benediction. He could not, at that time, have accepted human consolation. But the subtle influence of Nature—subtle yet potent—was what his spirit needed.

He fell to thinking of another walk he had taken—with Kate—along this very road, and afterward returning alone, as he was doing to-night. It was just such another night as this one, and was one of the few forbidden meetings of their troubled courtship. She had left him at the gate, and he had stood silently in the shadow and watched her white dress flitting up the moonlit path. At the door she had paused, and seeing his motionless figure, had waved him a "good-night," and then the dim old house

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swallowed her up from his view. He contrasted the void he felt that night as he turned homeward, with the feeling of desolation which was now clutching his very heart with its cruel grasp.

At home he found the lights out except in one room—his brother's; Frank was always the scholar of the family. He tapped gently on the window, and his brother let him in. He briefly announced his news, then, overcome by exhaustion, he sank upon the bed and slept till the sun was high.

Upon the day following occurred the funeral of which I speak—the last of three which strangely and swiftly followed one after another at intervals of a few weeks, the other two being Kate's baby and another little one, the only child of young parents.

Thus side by side with the growing community, our little cemetery among the sage-brush receives from time to time a new habitant. It is the inevitable accompaniment to life—this silent city. We have ours upon a hill, the sage brush cleared away, a neat fence surrounding the cleared space. Already wives have seen their husbands laid there, husbands their wives; an aged father from one household, an aged mother from another—while many tiny mounds represent as many desolated homes. As from time to time we gather about some freshly dug grave, and pay our last respects, we find it easier, I think, to drop our differences of opinion in the presence of so solemn a visitor; and those who would pass each other with averted eyes are here drawn together and mingle their tears, and feel, at least for a time, the blessedness of the feeling of forgiveness, and fellowship in sorrow. Thus Elmer, when he met the assembled family of his sweet young wife, felt that the last drop of animosity had vanished. The two families, in the presence of a grief so crushing, forgot that they were enemies. Somehow I do not believe this rare desert air favorable to the growth

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and continuance of a feud, after all. I cannot but believe that it has received its last blow and is dead and buried, and may be marked by the two mounds side by side in the grave-yard, the one long and narrow, the other so tiny and pathetic.

The story of Kate's experiences as gathered little by little from her own lips during this last illness, as well as from those who befriended her in her unhappy times, deserves a place here, not on account of its being unusual, but on the contrary, because it is all too common; its counterpart, in many or all of its sad details, being enacted over and over again in every crowded city. It is for the class to which Kate and Elmer belong that I would ask sympathy—who possess ability and ambition, who are of good family, with the pride which rightly goes with a consciousness of this fact; yet by the stress of circumstances made to feel themselves outcasts from the world's work, which seems to move forward with an aggressive air of not needing their assistance, and allotting to them no rightful place.

Month by month Elmer wearied himself in vain effort to obtain any honest employment. From one city to another drifted our poor young couple, meeting everywhere the same familiar "Not wanted," couched in its various forms. Their small supply of money was soon exhausted—many times they knew what it meant to be reduced to the last dime, and to spend even that. Elmer taught a term of school in the country, and obtained an occasional "job" as special reporter on one of the many dailies whose offices he was wont to haunt, having served an apprenticeship in an office in his early days. Once he thankfully drove a delivery wagon for a week or two in the place of the regular driver who was ill, and gave place to him at the end of that time with a lively feeling of envy—for was he not earning an honest livelihood?

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Finally he obtained the agency for a book, and Kate, rather than endure the loneliness and isolation of a life in the shabby and cramped "apartment" which was now all she had to call home, for several months followed this business also, with varying success. Sometimes she was so kindly treated, and obtained subscriptions so readily, that the way seemed smooth to her feet. Again she would step into the street with burning cheek, and tears dangerously near. But the time came when this poor little attempt at making a living had to be abandoned, and Elmer became sole bread-winner. It was now that the real loneliness began, which told so cruelly upon her mind. Often she would take her lonely walk along the river side, choosing byways until outside the city limits, crossing the bridge and getting for a time into the sweet country air; and carrying back bunches of wild flowers which reminded her of her home. Once, on her return walk, she paused and leaned over the railing of the bridge, gazing as if fascinated upon the rushing water beneath her, when a well-dressed stranger strolled leisurely by. He gave her a sharp glance, then deliberately stopped and engaged her in conversation, in the most pleasant and respectful manner. She saw that unless she moved on, he would not; so she slowly resumed her homeward way. No sooner had they passed the bridge than the stranger, raising his hat with a polite "Good evening, madam," briskly took up his walk toward the town, now and then looking back to see if she had left that river which seemed to draw her so strongly.

Kate understood his motive, and smiled to think how far from her thoughts was any idea of self-destruction. Nevertheless, the incident cheered her. The world seemed so heartless—so without pity and sympathy—and here was a stranger who appeared to care whether she drowned herself!

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Soon after this her baby was born. Elmer had gone on a walking trip across the country, and she seldom heard from him directly, as a postoffice was only a chance luxury with him. She had received three or four postal cards, the latest more than a week old and postmarked at a little office far out among the wheat lands. According to this, he was due at home several days past.

Each day the kindly nurse and the widow who occupied the adjoining room, found the young mother in a strange state of excitement. At train time this excitement would increase. Then when no familiar step sounded on the stair after a reasonable length of time, a gloom which was not to be driven away settled upon her mind. It was then she began to think the baby was ill. She would hold it and watch it by the hour; it always slept, but never cried. Finally after a week or more like this, there came a day when a crisis seemed at hand. She sat up and talked and ate and fondled her baby, and told those who came in that her husband was coming on the morning train. The nurse was hurried that morning, having other visits to make, but stopped a moment at the next-door neighbor's to ask the friendly widow to look in as often as possible—and then left Kate alone. The train came and half an hour passed—the poor young mother listening feverishly for the step along the hall. Then all the excitement died out of her face, and when the good neighbor came in a moment later it was to find her with her face turned to the wall, shaken with weeping. She had just been persuaded to take a brighter view of the disappointment, and was smiling bravely through her tears, when the door opened and Elmer stood in the doorway. He had not been apprised of events, as his address had been constantly changing; so he was unprepared for the tableau which met his eyes. "Why, Kathie!" he exclaimed, a world of tender

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meaning in his voice; and the good little widow took the opportunity to slip away to her own room.

The cause of his long absence was soon explained. A week before, exhausted and worried, he became an easy victim to the excessive heat, and had fallen insensible in the street at L—, where he had just begun his canvassing. He was found and carried to the nearest physician's office, and for the next week was constantly under medical care. But all this was expensive, so it was almost a penniless man who returned to find himself the head of a family---and a needy one at that; therefore it was essential that his stay be short. Making such provisions as he found possible, and resolving upon a short tour, he despondently continued on his way; having, together with his new joy of fatherhood, a feeling of dread foreboding which he could not banish.

At L—, to which point he at once returned, he canvassed the town very thoroughly, and with unusual success. And it was here that he met by chance an old friend of the family, who was able to obtain for him permanent employment as book-keeper upon one of the gigantic fruit farms and shipping establishments of that region. He has now returned to begin his duties; in fact he was hastening joyously homeward to remove his wife and baby into more congenial surroundings, when he found Mrs. Jeffries at her bedside, and this calamity overtook him, turning all his good fortune suddenly valueless. How often in life we may see this repeated ---that for which we long, and impatiently await, for which we would give our very life, or all but that, becomes, when at last we reach it, but a colorless possession. I often think it is not the person of genius who is the wonder, the exception, but rather he for whom all things combine to form his happiness. There is always some element lacking to form a perfect and rounded life. Who is there

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among us but acknowledges, in the depths of his innermost thought, some great thing missing, which we feel certain would have formed the complement of our natures? We are all unfinished, as it were: the difference lies only in degree, some being nearer completion than others.

If it were otherwise, I suppose we would not be mere men and women, but God-like beings. Perhaps this is why we all stop a little short of greatness, or of happiness---that we may see how imperfect we are, and must be, till the Maker puts the finishing touch upon the work of his hands; even as the artist may by a touch or a few vigorous strokes, transform the mere square of canvas or block of marble into something true and lifelike.

IN JOCUND MOOD

THE NECESSARY CONCLUSION.

We read in Shakespeare's mighty tragedies
Of old grave-diggers---sinister, industrious old jays:
From which we would infer, I wis,
Men ran for office also in those days.

*
* *

"JOHNSON."

At Mullan, Idaho, there died not long ago a local celebrity named Johnson. This worthy followed the vocation of gardening. He was an irascible old person, often inebriated, and the butt of many a practical joke and unlimited horseplay on the part of the playful citizens of the town. It was Johnson's habit to swell his income every summer by gathering the abundant huckleberries from the adjacent mountain sides. The fruit he would spread on his cottage roof to dry. Yellow-jackets throng in the Cœur d'Alene mountains in mid summer, and these pestiferous insects have a *penchant* for huckleberries. Johnson's life was embittered by the propensity of the yellow-jackets to fly away, one by one,

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with the fruit of his industry. The wrath of the old man would become so diverting to the jocose citizens of the camp that they sought to stimulate it by artificial means; so that it became the practice to shout, upon the approach of Johnson: "Hey Johnson—here's another yellow jacket flying off with another huckleberry!" Whereupon Johnson would profusely blaspheme, and consign both the yellow-jackets and his human associates to Gehenna. The cry became a sort of shibboleth of the Mullan streets, like the midnight call of the tamale man in cities:—"Red hot-chickentamales red hot red hot!"

My first introduction to Johnson was an astonishing experience. My predecessor in the printing office, it appears, had particularly aroused Johnson's ire by a long continued series of "joshes." So deep was the old man's hatred of this particular printer that it was his settled practice, upon coming within range, to hurl at him the first missile upon which he could lay hold. I stood in the printing office door the first day after my arrival in the town, when Johnson came down the street. The old fellow's vision was uncertain, but observing a man in the printing office doorway, he presumed it was the enemy, and I was amazed to hear a shower of brick-bats and cobble stones whistle about my ears.

A photographer from Spokane visited the camp, and in company with a local wag, went to Johnson's cabbage patch and set up the tripod in the middle of that sacred enclosure. Johnson soon espied the trespassers and sallied out of his cabin, shot-gun in hand. The wag introduced the photographer as a surveyor for the projected lines of the Northern Pacific railway. Johnson forbade the mighty corporation to interfere with his cabbages, whereupon the supposed surveyor stipulated that the line in crossing his land should construct a lofty trestle, thus leaving the ground open to continued

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cabbage production. But Johnson thought the trestle would obstruct the sunlight, retard the growth of cabbages, and that he must have heavy damages. Elaborate negotiations were then commenced, in which the entire town participated, with much apparent profit and pleasure. Long type-written documents, agreements, provisos, stipulations and guarantees, were drawn up and solemnly signed by Johnson and by the opera-bouffe surveyor. It was some weeks before it dawned upon Johnson that his fellow-citizens were merely having fun with him, and that the stranger with the tripod was only a kodak fiend.

* * *

THE FADS FOR NOVEMBER.

The bicycle fiend and the baseball fiend
Now inactive are, and dumb;
Now reigneth the festive football fiend
And the fiend with a large chrysanthemum.

OUR NOTE-BOOK.

OUR MEDIEVAL COUNTRY ROADS.

It is announced that in all probability the war revenue taxes will be permanent, the funds to be used in the construction and maintenance of a gigantic navy. Fifty-five new ships of war are already under course of construction. I have no quarrel with the administration whatever for this lavish expenditure and shall cheerfully thrust out my tongue to cause the two-cent revenue stamps to adhere to my checks until the end of the chapter. But I am led to marvel at the facility with which the public agrees to great expenditures for war purposes, when vastly more important enterprises have been greeted with almost complete indifference. A thorough system of national macadamized roads is the great and crying need of this Republic. Our country roads are, for the most part, not superior to the

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highways of Zululand. Moses and the Children of Israel found better roads during their forty years' wandering in the wilderness. Macadamized roads could be built through all the more populous regions for less than our new navy is to cost. The benefit to the nation would be immediate and enormous. But the public is indifferent. No doubt a large part of this indifference is due to the attitude of the great railway interests, which naturally do not desire to see the public highways made passable for travelers and freight.

* *

THE EASTERN IDEA OF THE NOBLE RED MAN

The Springfield *Republican* never loses an opportunity to voice the Massachusetts sentiment to the effect that the noble red man is really noble, and is not getting a fair deal from the United States government. Much tender sentiment is lavished upon the noble red woman, also, by the soft-hearted book-reviewer on the *Republican* staff, and the suspicion might gain credence in the utilitarian West that he is also affected with softening of the brain. In reviewing a recent Indian romance this theoretical and sentimental humanitarian exclaims, referring to the impossible Indian woman who figures as heroine in the story, "And of such Indian maidens there are many—true, sweet women to the core." Bill Nye's practice of calling the said maidens by appropriate names, such as "The Sore-eyed Sage Hen," for example, was regarded in Massachusetts as a hideous offense, and it is said Nye's books are barred out of many of the public libraries in that state.

Absurd as this Indian worship appears to the average Western man, it is one of the first articles in the New Englander's confession of faith. Whenever in our history that romantic meat-axe, the tomahawk, has been uplifted by the murderous savage

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nothing save a sense of unspeakable wrong has nerved the humane siwash to strike. When white men have been slaughtered—their tongues cut out and their frames otherwise artistically carved, pioneer women scalped and pioneer homes laid waste, it was but the just and natural retribution which overtakes the perpetrators of crimes that cry to heaven. The typical Puritan philanthropist has never been in the West, and it might be worth while for the state of Washington to pay the expenses of a car-load of pencil-pushers and give them an opportunity to cross the continent and view the noble red man in the bosom of his family. It might result in lifting from our heads the odium which our hard-heartedness toward the Indian has excited in the high-grade Puritan mind. The Spokane Chamber of Commerce might consider this idea.

It is a curious fact that our most frantic champions of the rights of the Indian, the Chinaman and the negro reside in New England, where the Indian, the Chinaman and the negro are rarely seen except as imported curiosities. A little of that gross but valuable quality, horse sense, combined with the immaculate thoughts and butterfly fancies and unfathomable hatred of injustice which characterize the modern Puritan, would improve his standing in the West.



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THE LITERARY WAYSIDE

THE SPRINGS OF TASTE.

A reader of *THE DILETTANTE* expresses some surprise that the censorious and somewhat (apparently) pessimistic Editor of this journal should express admiration for Tennyson's "Maud,"—a love tale of the most torrid character. The reader frankly confesses the impossibility of conceiving the Editor sympathizing with such a theme.

The explanation is simple. I am surprised in turn that "Constant Reader" should raise such a question. We are all attracted by accounts of adventures, modes of life and sentiments to which we are strangers. I am known as a truly pacific person; yet I devour tales of pirates with unextinguishable zest. The type of fiction which I particularly abhor is the abominable "realism"—the portrayal of a mode of life that daily comes under my personal observation. I delight in the volcanic lines of "Maud" because the experiences depicted there are as remote from my own experience as a picnic on the planet Mars. In like manner I have a *penchant* for descriptions of Arctic travel, when in actual life the chill of these autumn mornings is almost beyond my powers of endurance, and a trip to Greenland is as inconceivable for me as flight through the air.

* *

"WHEN THE BIRDS GO NORTH AGAIN."

I have been edified by the perusal of a dainty volume of verse by Ella Higginson, the Western poetess whose home is at New Whatcom, this state. It is an unique event—the production of a book of verse by a resident of the utilitarian West—and while devoid of the Tennysonian strain, the verses are filled with much forceful imagery and similes of beauty. The scenery is distinctly Western. Perhaps the gem of the entire collection is the poem, "Yet Am I Not For

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Pity," of which the theme is a reconciliation to a residence in the Far West and banishment from the storied cities of the Old World. It is assumed that wild Nature, the mountains and the forest, compensate one. The poem is an exquisite bit of work, but I am disposed to quarrel with the reasoning. Great cities and vast ancient civilizations make the liveliest appeal to the imagination. There is in the forest a certain "gigantic indifference" that is disheartening. As Warner so aptly says, "it would seem a relief to kick the trees." I do not take kindly to the rural regions—nor to the inhabitants thereof, estimable people though they may be.

But to return to the verses. They are clearly above mediocrity, and thus have a legitimate claim to consideration. The vocation of the versifier is particularly exacting, and the highest achievement is only possible for the favored few. We cannot rank these rhymes and roundelays with the work of the great bards, but among the minor poets our author will hold a secure and high position. I do not enjoy certain intense Wilcoxian strains in these verses, but have committed to memory sundry felicitous lines like these—minor strains, it is true, but wholly admirable:—

One softest wind blew from the hill,
And shook into my room
A flower from a locust tree,
And a locust flower's perfume.

The book is published by the Macmillan Co., New York; \$1.25.

* * *

EDWARD BELLAMY'S LAST BOOK.

"The Blindman's World" and fourteen other short stories by the late Edward Bellamy, have just been published in book form; and they make a volume fit to give thanks for. The stories are fanciful but not fantastic—improbable but with none of the

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weird or flighty imaginings which weigh upon a wholesome mind. Mr. Bellamy "does not so much transmute our every-day reality to the substance of romance, as make the airy stuff of dreams one in quality with veritable experience." There is a Hawthornesque charm in these unconservative tales; their curious originality of plot holds the reader's interest from cover to cover.

The opening sketch, which gives its title to the book, has for its subject an imaginary or spiritual visit to Mars—and the "Blindman's World" is the name by which our earth is known to the inhabitants of that happier planet. There are other tales in the collection which are more unique than this, and more pleasing, in my opinion. The biographical article which forms the preface to the book is written by W. D. Howells; and one is pleasantly surprised to find that high priest of Realism commending tales so airily romantic as these.

The book is handsomely bound in pale green and gold. Published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.50.

* *

A FEW OF THE AUTUMN BOOKS.

Just now literary America is glorifying a new genius—a Frenchman this time—with an energy and abandon almost equal to that which we displayed last year in laudation of Sienkiewicz. The United States—"Hermit of Nations"—seems to show a very un-hermit-like readiness to recognize any good thing that comes out of other lands. "Cyrano de Bergerac" is the most talked about book of the autumn. It is not a novel either, properly speaking, but a drama; and it was first produced in Paris last January. It took that city by storm, then set out on a triumphant progress through Europe, and will be presented in New York this winter by Richard Mansfield. It has been twice translated into English. Gertrude Hall's version is published by the Double-

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day & McClure Co.; the other by H. Russell. The drama is a startling, magnificent work, with all the bounding vivacity and "breeze" which is the birth-right of Parisian writers. A contemporary says of the author, Edward Rostand: "He is a Frenchman of France, and in 'Cyrano' he has given to his countrymen precisely what they want."

Mr. A H. S. Landor's book describing his adventures and sufferings in ferocious Thibet, where he was tortured by the inhospitable natives, will soon be issued from the Harpers' publishing house. If there is any virtue in newspaper notoriety, Mr. Landor's volume should meet with an enormous sale. It is called "The Forbidden Land." Hon. E. S. Wallace, formerly U. S. consul for Palestine, has written a book on "Jerusalem the Holy," and the Fleming-Revell Co. bring it out. He was a resident of the Holy city for four or five years, and knows whereof he writes. A study of "Spanish Literature," by Jas. Fitz-Maurice Kelly, is advertised by the D. Appleton Co.

Rudyard Kipling's new volume of sketches has just been published under the title, "The Day's Work." Houghton, Mifflin & Co. bring out a new book of short tales by Maurice Thompson, "Stories of the Cherokee Hills." They deal with the "South before the war." Lillian Bell also offers a new book of short stories—"The Instinct of Step-Fatherhood." In spite of the fact that volumes of short tales are unpopular in public libraries, being allowed to remain for the most part upon the shelves, publishers seem to consider them a tolerably "safe risk."

Robert W. Chambers comes out with a striking novel, "Ashes of Empire"—narrating the adventures of two young men, an American and an Englishman, who passed through the Siege of Paris. F. A. Stokes & Co. publish the story. William Black produces his annual novel—"Wild Eelin" is its title

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this time, and the Harpers bring it out. Gertrude Atherton's latest book, "The Californians," is just published by John Lane. The author of "Forest Lovers" offers another volume to the public, "Pan and the Young Shepherd," which is described as a "pastoral play." Maxwell Gray, author of "The Silence of Dean Maitland," has written a strong novel under the title, "The House of Hidden Treasures." Lee and Shepherd of Boston publish "Hawaii's Story," by Hawaii's queen, Liliuokalani.

MAGAZINES AND PERIODICALS.

Lippincott's Magazine for November has a novelette by Mrs. Burton Harrison, "A Triple Entanglement." Other interesting contributions are "Our Soldiers' Songs," "Oriental Stagecraft," "The Horse in Folk Lore." The "Books of the Month" are entertainingly discussed, and there are several pages of anecdotes and notes on current topics.

The November *Ladies' Home Journal* has a pleasing design for its cover—a design suggestive of Thanksgiving cheer. It contains the first installment of a new serial by Mary E. Wilkins, "The Jamesons in the Country"—a humorous story. Mr. Henry M. Stanley contributes the story of "My First Fight in the Jungle." An illustrated article is "The Anecdotal Side of Mr. Moody," and there is an interesting page of "Snap Shots at Famous People." The continuation of "The Minister of Carthage," several short tales and sketches, and the usual special departments, make up a delightful number.

Collier's Weekly for October 15 has for its double-page picture a very unusual subject. It is called, "The Occupation of Cuba—Baseball between Our Army and Navy at Guantanamo, September 11, 1898." It was the first baseball game in Cuba since the war. There are three pages of additional material concerning the coronation of the young queen of Holland. The New York State Conventions—Republican and Democratic—receive a good share of attention, and the text thereon is accompanied by pictures of Col. Roosevelt in his home, and sketches of leading characters at the Convention. The leading topic in "The Drama" for the week is the presentation of "Cyrano de Bergerac" by Richard Mansfield, and there is a decidedly striking full-page portrait of the well-known actor in his new character.

The principal attractions offered by *The Youth's Companion* for the remaining weeks of 1898 provide a foretaste of the good things to follow in the new volume for 1899. To the first issue in November Frank R. Stockton will contribute a humorous sketch entitled "Some of My Dogs," and in the issue for the week of November 10th will appear Rudyard Kipling's thrilling story of the heroism of soldiers in the ranks, "The Burning of the Sarah Sands." In the seven issues to follow there will be contributions by Lord Dufferin, W. D. Howells, J. E. Chamberlain, the American war correspondent, Mary E. Wilkins, Hon. Thomas B. Reed, the Marquis of Lorne, Madame Lillian Nordica and I. Zangwill.

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Those who subscribe now for the 1899 volume will receive every November and December issue of the *Companion* from the time of subscription to the end of the year free, the *Companion* Calendar for 1899 free, and then the entire 52 issues of *The Youth's Companion* to January 1, 1900. An illustrated announcement of the 1899 volume and sample copies will be sent free to anyone addressing: *The Youth's Companion*, 211 Columbus Ave., Boston.



A PERFECT DAY

It is a day lost from some perfect June
And set within the middle of November;
It has the golden mystery of September,
And the blue skies of a warm summer noon.
There is a low wind singing an old tune,
Sung once by tender winds that I remember;
The soft, high sun burns like a crimson ember
Deep in the blue flame of the air. . . So soon
A gray and lonely morrow will arise,
This fair day well is worth the holding fast.
Behold! how dreamily the mute sea lies
Below; how seabirds lazily drift past;
And how the mountains, white for centuries,
Shine on the sky. . . O day, that thou might'st
last!

From "When the Birds Go North Again," poems
by Ella Higginson.

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RAMBLES IN ENGLAND

Written for The Dilettante.

BY KATE ZILLWOOD.

II

It was on a dull, grey, gloomy afternoon in early spring that I turned aside from the noise and din of our grand old Southampton High Street—picturesque jumble of modern and mediæval houses and churches, spanned about midway by its ancient Bargate—into a quiet side street, ending one way in an old Norman church with a lofty spire, and the other in the blue sea. It was here I found the object of my quest, “The old Tudor House.” A quiet street now, for its glory has departed, and what wealth and fashion is left to the busy commercial town has moved upwards from the sea; but in the brave days of old King and Court, noble and gallant, were here in all their splendor, and bluff King Hal held high revel in the old Tudor House. To look at from without it is a somewhat heavy piece of Tudor architecture, with gabled roof and overhanging upper story, the windows of strong iron lattice work, and small diamond panes of thick greenish glass. Armed with an introduction to the present occupant I rang the bell and waited. The door opened—the *door*, for they made doors in those days and this one is a good specimen. Of solid oak, bound with iron, and studded with great nails, the lock was twenty-seven inches long, nine broad and three thick, and the bolt itself as thick as a man’s wrist. There was a chain, too, for greater security, almost strong enough for a ship’s cable. Truly, folk had small faith in their fellows in the good old days.

My host, himself a builder, took a keen interest in his historical residence, and proved a very courteous and entertaining guide; and though he did speak of the “‘all of the ‘ouse” and the “‘asp of the

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window," I forgave him---it is in the climate. From the door we passed along the narrow corridor, so narrow it is difficult to imagine how Queen Elizabeth and her ladies, in their ruffs and farthingales, found space enough to flirt and flutter there; and then we climbed the narrow staircase to the state bedchambers.

The first was a small mean looking room, with massive walls, so thick that the high lattice window seemed almost lost in its depth. The ceiling was of panelled oak---which some one had *whitewashed*. Next we saw the Elizabethan room, where the proud restless head of King Harry's daughter, in the days of her glory and power, had lain in quiet sleep or tossed in uneasy dreams; a large square room with oval window looking to the sea. The fireplace is in carved oak which had been painted and spoiled, but must have been fine once. The door handles were of fine brass, chased, and oval in shape.

I saw the buttery; the kitchen, a dark, dreary place, unceiled, showing the great oak rafters black with age and smoke---from which, no doubt, once hung the huge joints of beef and venison in which our forefathers delighted. I got a glimpse into the cellar; plenty of room down there; and I saw in imagination some portly "Simon the cellarer" gloating over his tuns of ale. We then went into the parlor-- the prettiest room of all; a grand old room, with large bay window looking out upon the square walled garden and the sea beyond, unchanged since the days of Elizabeth; and all at once the present faded from me, and I saw as in a dream the days of old.

They filled the quaint old rooms, those ghosts of long ago. King Harry was there, in slashed doublet and ruff, with Anne Boleyn on his arm. He was saying soft nothings to her, and I thought of the pale, proud, discarded Catharine, and counted him

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a mean fellow for all his fine phrases and beautiful religious sentiments as edited by his historical whitewasher, Froude. They passed on, Anne to shame and death, the King to fresh affairs du coeur, and Mary came, saddest of women and most forlorn of queens; and then Elizabeth with her courtly crowd, Sydney and Raleigh, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson: all these in their day had trod the floor of the old Tudor house; and there was music and dancing, and barges, silken sailed, swept over the sparkling waters up to the very wall of the garden.

A word from my guide dispelled the dream, and we went out into the garden. At his direction I climbed a rickety ladder, and saw in a part of the old town wall a Norman fireplace. A square niche had been hollowed in the gray stone, supported on either side by graceful pillars, and there the Norman barons' wood had crackled, and his family sat around the fire.

I looked from the fireplace to the house, the two civilizations that in the dim past had confronted one another, and I wondered why the one had conquered and the other failed. Why did Chaucer write in homely Saxon of "Canterbury Pilgrims" instead of writing of Norman chivalry in French?

There came no answer to my query, and still musing on these things I said goodbye to my kind host and passed out into the street; into the busy rush of modern life. Twilight had fallen and the gas lamps flared on noisy crowds and busy stores. The newspaper boys called, "Extra! All about Spain and America!" and Norman knight and Tudor gallant faded back into the Past.

Apologies:

**The following two pages from the November
1898 issue (vol. 1, no. 8) are missing from the
MJP's edition of *The Dilettante*.**

Page 30 should appear here.

Page 31 should appear here.

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FROM AN OLD PARTERRE

By evening came a thousand stars,
And shone o'er stately Babylon,
While from his window lattice bars
A captive prince looked down upon
The river that flowed ever on.

Beneath him in an old parterre
A Syrian girl reclined at ease,
And touched her lute with meaning rare,
While in and out among the trees
Came murmurs of the dying breeze.

She touched her lute with meaning rare,
And sang an old romantic lay.
The prince forgot his evening prayer,
And taking up his oboe
Began in softened tone to play.

He wooed the maid, perchance he won,
Alas! the story ended there.
Some king that racked great Babylon
Left but a single page to bear
This echo from an old parterre.

Rufus M. Gibbs.

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