

### On the Common.

She was a Boston maid of high degree,  
With eyes that shone like incandescent lights,  
And just such pouting lips as seems to me  
The kiss invites.

I met her on the Common's grassy sod,  
Near where the fountain plays in sportive mood;  
She stood reflective, while the plastic wad  
Of gum she chewed.

"It does one good to seek this spot," said I,  
"When weary of the city's hum and buzz."  
She ceased her waxy pastime to reply:  
"That's what it does."

"This sylvan spot," then softly I averred  
"The foot of man seems almost to defile."  
Her voice came sweet as notes of woodland birds:  
"Well I should smile."

"The balmy breezes whispering overhead  
With such enchanting softness kiss the brow!"  
In tones of liquid melody she said:  
"You're shouting now."

"And have you noticed, fair one, how each bird  
Seems here to choose its sweetest vocal gem?"  
I dwelt in rapture on her every word:  
"I'm onto them."

"And now the leaves like moving emeralds seem,  
When in response to the sweet breeze they shake."  
Her voice came soft as echo from a dream:  
"They take the cake."

"And do you catch the flowers' fragrance sweet  
From yonder garden when the soft wind blows?"  
She answered as she viewed my rugged feet:  
"You bet your nose."

"Dost wander often to this sylvan spot,  
The dreamy sense of quietude to seek?"  
Soft purled her answer: "Well, I take a trot  
'Bout once a week."

In converse sweet I lingered by her side,  
And felt that there forever I could dwell,  
And as I left her, after me she cried:  
"So long, old fel,"

I was not captured by her voice so rich,  
Nor with her lovely face, so fresh and young,  
But with the sweet dexterity with which  
Her slang she slung.

—CAPT. JACK CRAWFORD,  
in *Owen Sound Times*.

### Lovely Maidens of Guinea.

TO BE BOUGHT FOR AN AXE A PIECE—A LOW-  
PRICED BEAUTY FOR A PIECE OF CALICO—  
WHERE A GRASS PETTICOAT IS A  
SUFFICIENT GARMENT FOR  
A YOUNG LADY.

From the *Washington Star*.

"Such opportunities for matrimony as were offered me in New Guinea a few years ago I never expect to enjoy again," said Artist Sherman F. Denton, of the United States fish commission, to a *Star* reporter. "My journey through the land of the Papuans was made for the purpose of collecting specimens of all sorts, such as a naturalist seeks to gather, but the people themselves are the most interesting savages I have ever met. The men and children go about entirely naked, while the women wear only short grass petticoats. I employed a young black fellow named Roboor to help me in my work. His hair was a tush of kinky fuzz and stood up on his head in a mass as big as a half bushel measure. I found out that he was in love, but he admitted with a sigh that he was too poor to marry the girl of his choice.

'You are young and strong,' said I. 'Why do you not go to work and earn enough to support yourself and your sweetheart?'

'You do not understand,' he replied.

'I have a good garden that would supply what food we wanted; besides, I can throw the spear further and truer to the mark than any other man in the district, so that I can get

plenty of kangaroos and pigs. But they will not buy the girl. Her mother wants an axe for her, and that I cannot grow in my garden or hunt in the forests with my spear.'

"The poor fellow groaned, made several disparaging remarks on his prospective mother-in-law, and finally said that if he did not love the young woman so dearly he would go away and never come back again.

'But, my boy, you need not despair,' said I. 'If the possession of an axe will secure your happiness I will give you one. I want many paradise birds, for in my country people think more of them than of axes. If you will help me get as many birds with the long plumes as you have fingers on both hands you shall have the axe on the day we get the last one.'

He accepted the proposition delightedly. At length, with his assistance, the ten good birds were procured and the axe earned. I was present when Roboor bought his wife with it. They were married the following morning, the ceremony being concluded with a wild dance and singing by a chorus of girls.

Papuan girls are sometimes very pretty. Once, when out shooting, I met a strikingly handsome young woman. She was frightened at first and turned to run away, but I quieted her fears with a small offering of beads. I should judge that she was sixteen or seventeen years old, rather tall, of fine figure, and as supple and graceful as a swan. She was very light and the warm blood glowed through the brown color of her skin. Her hair was brown and curly, and clustered about her face in a most attractive manner. Her eyes were dark, with a mischievous twinkle; her nose was straight and her mouth handsome enough for a Venus, had a dimple at each corner when she laughed. Altogether, she was a beauty.

One day, after we had been in the country a good while and were able to talk pretty well in the Papuan language, a friendly native named Lohier came to us with something important to say. After receiving assurance from us that we liked the people and the region, considering the latter as beautiful and fertile as any we had ever seen, he asked:

'Do you possess wives in America?'

'No,' we replied.

'Have you sweethearts?'

'No; we have had, but they are all married.'

'How do you like the Papuan girls?'

'Some of them are very handsome and pleasing.'

'Would you like to get married in New Guinea?'

'That depends on circumstances.'

'How much do you pay for a wife in America?'

Some are very expensive and others very cheap. Usually the expenses come after they are married. The parents of some girls are so anxious to dispose of their daughters that they buy husbands for them.'

'Would you marry any you have seen here?'

'Hardly. You see, Lohier, we came a long, long distance to get to New Guinea, and, as we are rich and very good looking, we ought to have the best your country affords.'

At that Lohier started up with a whoop and a yell and was off. We went on with our work, thinking no more about the matter.

As we were preparing our dinner one afternoon a titter and a giggle were wafted to our ears. Looking around we beheld Lohier in the midst of a group of fifteen or twenty girls, many of them of superior beauty, who were laughing and peering at us over each other's shoulders. They all wore flowers in their hair and bands of green leaves adorned their arms and ankles. Each maiden had on her best striped petticoat and some wore necklaces of dogs' teeth.

At length Lohier, stepping forward, said that he had been a long way, had visited the biggest towns of his country, and had brought back with him the most beautiful women of his nation. He hoped we would each select one that would please us, marry her and settle down in New Guinea. The parents of some of the girls had come also and were standing in the background. Our friend explained to us that the prices were high, as they were the finest girls in the land. He arranged them all in a giggling line, that they might be seen to the best advantage. Beginning with the first, he told the names and gave their different accomplishments.

'This young lady's name is Mima. She can sing, dance, work in the garden, cook kangaroo and is good tempered. The price for her is a knife and looking-glass. What do you say to her?'

'What about the next?' we asked.

'This one's name is Dimena. She is handsome, very shapely and has nice hair and eyes. Her father is rich and she can make earthen pots and fish-nets. Her father is the chief man in his village. He wants two axes for his daughter, but if you live in his town he will give you part of his big house and a garden.'

'Tell us about the next,' we said.

'Here is a nice little girl. Her name is Kioto. She is very affectionate, is kind to her aged mother, knows how to make brooms, can cook a pig without burning it and is economical. Her garden has no weeds in it and she raises excellent bananas. She wants to get married and her mother will let her go for a piece of calico large enough to make a petticoat.'

I noticed the beautiful girl whom I had met while out shooting among the number of the maidens and I was anxious to hear what Lohier would say of her. She still wore the string of beads I had given her and looked as pretty and modest as a violet. When he came to her he said:

'This is Lucena. Is she not lovely? Her arms are round as bamboo; her form is supple as the climbing vine; her skin is smooth as a young banana leaf; her hair is soft as spiders' webs; her eyes are bright as dew in the morning. She can sing like a bird and run fast as a kangaroo; she is a good housekeeper, an affectionate daughter, and comes from a good family, for her father is a great warrior.'

The value set upon the beauty was an axe, a knife, a piece of calico and a string of beads. We stood admiring her, and Lohier thought he had made a bargain. We realized that the affair might turn out seriously, perhaps, but