

## HOW STRANGE IT WILL BE.

How strange it will be, love — how strange when we two  
Shall be what all lovers become!  
You rigid and faithless, I cold and untrue;  
You thoughtless of me, and I careless of you;  
Our pet names grown rusty with nothing to do;  
Love's bright web untravelling, and rent and worn through,  
And life's loom left empty—ah, hum!  
Ah, me!  
How strange it will be!

How strange it will be when the witchery goes,  
Which makes me seem lovely to-day;  
When your thought of me loses its *couleur de rose*;  
When every day serves some new fault to disclose,  
And wonder you could for a moment suppose—  
When you find I've cold eyes, and an every-day nose—  
I was out of the common-place way;  
Ah, me!  
How strange it will be!

How strange it will be, love—how strange when we meet  
With just a chill touch of the hand;  
When my pulses no longer delightfully beat  
At the thought of your coming, the sound of your feet;  
When I watch not your coming far down the long street,  
When your dear loving voice, too, so thrillingly sweet,  
Grows harsh in reproach or command;  
Ah, me!  
How strange it will be!

How strange it will be when we willingly stay  
Divided the weary day through;  
Or getting remotely apart, as we may,  
Sit chilly and silent, with nothing to say;  
Or coolly converse on the news of the day,  
In a wearisome, old married folk sort of way!  
I shrink from the picture—don't you?  
Ah, me!  
How strange it will be!

Dear love, if our hearts do grow torpid and cold,  
As so many others have done;  
If we let our love perish with hunger and cold;  
If we dim all life's diamonds and tarnish its gold;  
If we choose to live wretched and died unconsolated,  
'Twill be strange: of all things that ever were told  
As happening under the sun!  
Ah, me!  
How strange it will be!

## THE PRAIRIE DUEL.

Fifteen years ago, when the Great West seemed to be much further west than it does in these days of railroads, that "belt and creation," a remote patch or corner of one of the great prairies was counted by the few hunters and settlers occupying it as a district in itself, and they called it Little Elk Prairie. Among the half-wild characters who had built for themselves hovels of driftwood and brush on this bit of rolling plain was a huge hulking fellow of mixed French Canadian, Indian, and negro blood, whose name was Bendbow Laval. A complete savage in appearance, his clothing, whether in summer or winter, never consisted of more than two garments—a ragged shirt and trousers, the material of which was rendered problematical by age and dirt. The mass of woolly, iron-gray hair by which his head was thatched was crowned by something that had once been a portion of a hat; and his immense stockingless feet were thrust into rude cowskin shoes, with holes cut in them to accommodate certain peculiarities of shape and pedal excretion. From his huge size and muscular development, Laval was more than a match for any one of the dwellers of Little Elk Prairie, none of whom were "chickens" as regarded physical strength. Entirely devoid of education—for he did not know one letter of the alphabet from another—nevertheless the great coarse fellow had a sort of chivalry about him which might or might not have been derived from his share of French blood. His appreciation of the benefits and etiquette of duelling was intense, and he had more than once killed his antagonist in a fair fight. A much more dangerous man to deal with than Laval was Habakuk Sams, by origin a Yankee, as his name denotes, but a prairie man by predilection and long residence. "Hab," as he was called by the men of the plain, was a thin, wiry man of the middle age, with a brick-red complexion and very light hair. He was an excellent marksman, and had a reputation for courage, shown in encounters with Indians and bears; but he always preferred mild stratagem to skill or strength for the discomfiture of his foes. He had had several disputes with Laval, on the common basis of accusation that each was in the habit of stealing animals from the other's traps. This, in the code of the plains, is an unpardonable offence. Men caught in the act have frequently been killed on the spot, and when the offender was an Indian there are traditions of his having been

tortured before being put to death. Whether Hab Sams had ever defrauded Laval by purloining fur creatures from the traps set by the latter never transpired. But that Laval was a fur-thief was established beyond a doubt when he was seen carrying to his hovel, one day, a black wolf, caught in a trap set by Hab, and which the latter had left there purposely to test the honesty of his rival. Hab's first idea was to fire upon the purloiner of his property, and so adjust the matter without any need of further reference or appeal. On further consideration, however, he approached Laval, and, taxing him with the theft, demanded restitution of his property or "reason why." "Take that, then," howled the huge fellow, hurling the wolf with such a force at Hab that it knocked him down and sent him spinning a distance of several feet. In a moment Hab Sams had risen on one knee, and, taking aim at his antagonist, fired, but without effect, owing to the flurry caused by the suddenness of the assault. On proceeding to reload his rifle he remembered that he had no powder; but Laval was in a similar predicament, for all the powder in the place had been expended in a recent hunt, and they were awaiting the arrival of a messenger with some from the nearest trading post. Drawing their knives then, the two approached each other for a deadly conflict, which would have been an unequal one, however, owing to the superior strength of Laval, who was also a proficient in the use of the knife. Knowing how slight his chance was with such an antagonist, Hab Sams paused, and looking fixedly at Laval, said, "If you are a man, and not a cowardly sneak, you will fight it out with me in another way, and give me an equal chance of my life." "What way do you want to settle it, then?" said the other. "I'm as good as you anyhow, and ain't afraid to get square with you any way you please. Name your plan, and I'll go you even on it." "Well, then," rejoined Hab, "here's what we'll do, if you have heart enough to do it, as I have. Let's go to the place where the prairie dogs burrow, away over there. The rattlesnakes that live there are big, and unfailing with their deadly fangs. Let each of us choose a burrow, lie down in front of it, thrust his arm in to the shoulder, and wait to see which of us will die first. You're too white-livered a fellow to fight it out that way with me, eh?" Fearful to back out from this horrible proposition lest his reputation for valor might become tarnished forever, Laval agreed to it, trusting that, if one only keeps still, rattlesnakes are not apt to bite. The matter was arranged as follows: They were to meet next morning, half an hour before sunrise, with one witness, who was to act as umpire for both. The burrows in which they were to place their hands were to be selected by this umpire, who was to see them properly and impartially placed. There they were to remain until the first ray of the sun beamed above the horizon, a few minutes before which it is the habit of rattlesnakes to crawl forth from their dens. The umpire was to notify them of the rise of the sun, at which moment they were to be free to go their ways, should they have escaped the fangs of the venomous reptiles. The honor of both was then to be considered as fully satisfied, and from this there was to be no appeal. It must have been a terrible time, that quarter of an hour before sunrise, to the victims of the etiquette with which the duello ever has been rendered romantic. Perhaps Hab Sams did not feel it so acutely as his rival, for reasons best known to himself. The first gleam of dawn now reddened upon the horizon, and at a word from the umpire Hab Sams sprang to his feet, expressing by a loud whoop his satisfaction at having come safely out of the terrible ordeal. Not so with his rival, who lay where the umpire had placed him motionless as a log. On examination, it was found that he was in a death-like swoon, from which he was with difficulty recovered by the free use of whiskey. Sheer fright had got the better of the man's brute courage, and brought him to the brink of death. Hab Sams, as already hinted, had reasons of his own for preserving his equanimity of mind throughout the fearful ordeal. A little after sunset the previous evening, when the rattlesnakes had retired for the night, he took the precaution of stuffing a number of the dens in that part of the prairie agreed on for the rendez-vous with a sort of weed that is most noxious to the snakes, rendering them torpid for many hours, and unable to crawl or strike. This is how Yankee ingenuity triumphed over brute strength, and Bendbow was ever afterwards obliged to knock under to Habakuk Sams, when personal fortitude was the subject in hand.

## THE FORTUNE OF LAW.

I was chatting one day with an old schoolfellow of mine, who, though young, was a lawyer of some eminence, when the conversation turned upon his own career. "People," he said, "give me credit for much more than I deserve. They compliment me on having attained my position by talent, and sagacity, and all that; but the fact is, I have been an extremely lucky man—I mean as regards opportunities. The only thing for which I really can consider myself entitled to any credit is, that I have always been prompt to take advantage of them." "But," I observed, "you have a high reputation for legal knowledge and acumen. I have heard several persons speak in terms of great

praise of the manner in which you conducted some of your late cases."

"Ah! yes," he returned; "when a man is fortunate, the world soon finds fine things in him. There is nothing like gilding to hide imperfections and bring out excellences. But I will just give you one instance of what I call my luck. It happened a year or two ago, and before I was quite as well known as I am now; it was a trivial matter in itself, but very important in its consequences to me, and has ever since been fresh in my memory. I had been retained on behalf of a gentleman who was defendant in an action of debt, brought against him by a bricklayer, to recover the amount of a bill, stated to be due for building work done on the gentleman's premises. The owner refused payment on the ground that a verbal contract had been made for the execution of the work, at a price less by one-third than the amount claimed. Unfortunately he had no witnesses to the fact. The man denied the contract, alleged that no specification had been made, and pleaded finally, that if such contract had been entered into, it was vitiated by alterations, to all of which he was prepared to swear, and had his assistant also ready to certify the amount of labor and material expended. I gave my opinion that it was a hopeless case, and that the defendant had better agree to a compromise than incur any further expenses. However, he would not, and I was fain to trust to the chapter of accidents for any chance of success.

"Near the town where the trial was to take place, lived an old friend of mine, who, after the first day's assize, carried me off in his carriage to dine and sleep at his house, engaging to drive me over early next morning in time for this case, which stood next on the list. Mr. Tritten, the gentleman in question, was there also, and we had another discussion as to the prospect of his defense. 'I know the fellow,' said he, 'to be a thorough rascal, and it is because I feel so confident that something will come out to prove it, that I am determined to persist.' I said I hoped it might be so, and we retired to rest.

"After breakfast the next morning, my host drove me over in his dog-cart to the assize town. We were just entering the outskirts, when, from a turning down by the old inn and posting-house, where the horse was usually put up, there came running toward us a lad pursued by a man, who was threatening him in a savage manner. Finding himself overtaken, the lad, after the custom of small boys in such circumstances, lay down, curling himself up, and holding his hands clasped over his head. The man approached, and after beating him roughly with his fist, and trying to pull him up without success, took hold of the collar of the boy's coat and knocked his head several times upon the ground. We were just opposite at the moment, and my friend bade him let the lad alone, and not be such a brute. The fellow scowled, and telling us, with an oath, to mind our own business, for the boy was his own, and he had a right to beat him if he pleased, walked off, and his victim scampered away in the opposite direction.

"The dog-cart was put up, and we presently went on to the court. The case was opened in an off-hand style by the opposite counsel, who characterized the plea of a contract as a shallow evasion, and called the plaintiff assis principal witness. What was my surprise to see get into the box the very man whom we had beheld hammering the boy's head on the curb-stone an hour before. An idea occurred to me at the moment, and I half averted my face from him; though, indeed, it was hardly likely he would recognize me under my forensic wig. He gave his evidence in a positive, defiant sort of way, but very clearly and decisively. He had evidently got his story well by heart, and was determined to stick to it. I rose and made a show of cross-examining him till I saw that he was getting irritated and denying things in a wholesale style. He had been drinking, too, I thought, just enough to make him insolent and reckless. So, after a few more unimportant questions, I asked, in a casual tone—'You are married, Mr. Myers?'

"Yes, I am."  
"And you are a kind husband, I suppose?"  
"I suppose so; what then?"  
"Have any children blessed your union, Mr. Myers?"

"The plaintiff's counsel here called on the judge to interfere. The questions were irrelevant and impertinent to the matter in question. 'I pledged my word to the Court that they were neither, but had a very important bearing on the case, and was allowed to proceed. I repeated my question.

"I've a boy and a girl."  
"Pray how old are they?"  
"The boy's twelve, the girl nine, I believe."  
"Ah! Well, I suppose you are an affectionate father, as well as a kind husband. You are not in the habit of beating your wife and children, are you?"  
"I don't see what business it is of yours. No! I ain't."  
"You don't knock your son about, for example!"

"No! I don't, (He was growing downright savage, especially as the people in the court began to laugh.)  
"You don't pummel him with your fist, eh?"

"No! I don't."  
"Or knock his head upon the ground, in this manner?" (and I rapped the table with my knuckles.)

"No!" (indignantly.)  
"You never did such a thing?"  
"No!"  
"You swear to that?"

"Yes!"

"All this time I had never given him an opportunity of seeing my face; I now turned toward him and said—

"Look at me, sir. Did you ever see me before?"

"He was about to say No again; but all at once he stopped, turned very white, and made no answer.

"That will do," I said; "stand down, sir. My lord, I shall prove to you that this witness is not to be believed on his oath."

"I then related what we had seen that morning, and putting my friend, who had been sitting behind me all the while, into the witness-box, he of course confirmed the statement.

"The Court immediately decided that the man was unworthy of belief, and the result was a verdict for the defendant, with costs, and a severe reprimand from the Judge to Myers, who was very near being committed for perjury. But for the occurrence of the morning, the decision would inevitably have been against us. As I said before, it was in a double sense fortunate for me, for it was the means of my introduction, through Mr. Tritten, to an influential and lucrative connection."

## CURIOSITIES OF SUPERSTITION.

Louis Napoleon in his will emphasizes the solemn declaration: "With regard to my son, let him keep as a talisman the seal I used to wear attached to my watch." This piece of fetishism would appear to have formed yet another link between the imperial exile who has passed from our midst and those Latin races whose cause he affected to represent, whose superstition he certainly shared. Indeed, the ancient Romans degraded a priest because his mitre fell, and unmade a dictator because a rat squeaked. Caesar crossed the Rubicon, because, on the opposite bank, he saw a man with a fine figure. His nephew felt confident of winning the battle of Actium, because he met a peasant of the name of Nicolaus mounted on an ass. Wolsey was warned of his doom by a cross-head; Sejanus by a flight of crows. Dr. Johnson objected to going under a ladder. Montaigne avoided giving his left foot priority in putting on his stockings. Alexander was believed to have untied the Gordian knot with a slice of his sword. For good-luck's sake, Augustus wore some portion of a sea calf; Charlemagne some trinket of unknown value. Mohammed was all fate; Bonaparte all star and destiny. Cromwell believed in September 3, and Louis Napoleon in December 2. Sulla called himself Felix, the favored child of fortune, and Timoleon turned his house into a temple of chance. Alexander, if we may credit the account given by Quintus Curtius, was terrified by blood flowing from inside his soldiers' bread during the siege of Tyre in 332 B. C. His seer, Aristander, foresaw in this crimson efflux of the vital stream out of the commissariat a happy issue for the Macedonians; and the warriors thus nerved took Tyre. From the year 1004, the alarming spectacle of the bleeding host and bread, as well as the bewitched bloody milk, several times in each century, gave simple folk a scare; thus, it was noticed in 1264, under Urbain IV., at Bolsena, not far from Civita Vecchia; and Raphael has taken this for the subject of his picture called the "Miracolo de Bolsena," which is a miracle of the pencil. In 1383, when Heinrich Von Bulow destroyed the village and church of Wilsnach, drops of blood were found eight days afterward on the host placed on the altar. But the victims of superstition have the bump of casualty remarkably developed; and in 1510, thirty-eight Jews were burned to ashes because they had tortured the consecrated host until it bled. Again, the sight was seen on the Moselle in 1324; and in 1848 the famous Ehrenberg analyzed the terrible portent. After stooping with his microscope over the red stains on bread, cheese, and potatoes, this savant declared that they were caused by small monads or vibrios, which have a red color, and are so minute that from 46,658,000,000, to 84,736,000,000,000, distinct beings adorn the space of one cubic inch. Unfortunately, when, in 1510, thirty-eight Israelites, as we have seen, were burnt to ashes, no scientific Ehrenberg existed to point out to their superstitious butchers that what they called a proof of the consecrated host being tortured until it bled, was merely due to aggregation of hungry red insects.

HAWAIIAN WOMEN.—In the girls' schools you will see an occasional pretty face, but fewer than I expected to see; and to my notion the Hawaiian girl is rarely very attractive. Among the middle-aged women you often meet with fine heads and large expressive features. The women have not unfrequently a majesty of carriage and a tragic intensity of features and expression which are quite remarkable. Their loose dress gives grace as well as dignity to their movements; and whoever invented it for them deserves more credit than he has received. It is a little startling at first to see women walking about in what, to our perverted tastes, looks like calico or black stuff night gowns; but the dress grows on you as you become accustomed to it; it lends itself readily to bright ornamentation, it is eminently fit for the climate, and a stately Hawaiian dame, marching through the street, in black holaku—as the dress is called—with a long necklace, or le, of bright scarlet, or brilliant yellow flower, bare and untrammelled feet, and flowing hair, compare very favorably with a high-heeled, wasp-waisted, absurdly bonneted, fashionable white lady.