The Harbor Bar.

BY CURTIS BURR TODD.

A ship has crossed the harbor bar,
The sunlight glinting on rope and spar;
Whither she goes, who knows? who knows?
She carries pearls of lustrous hue,
Costly fabrics of far Hindoo,
A tender maid to her lover true.

The wind has crossed the harbor bar,
All armed and panoplied for war;
Whither it goes, who knows? who knows?
It darts on the ship far out at sea,
It tears and rends her with savage glee,
And, lo! a wreck drifts wild and free.

The sea has crossed the harbor bar,
It hears a potent voice from afar;
Whither it goes, who knows? who knows?
Rising upon a land of palms,
It throws a wreck to sea—walled farms,
And a lifeless maid to her lover's arms.

—Lippincott's Magazine.

THE BACHELOR RECLAIMED:

By H. T. T.

"You are determined not to marry?"

"Absolutely."

"And why?"

"In the first place, I never expect to be able to support a wife according to my ideas of comfort. In the second place, I have no hope of meeting a woman who will sympathize sufficiently with my feelings and views to be a congenial companion. Thirdly, I cannot bear the idea of adopting as constant associates the relatives of her I may love; and fourthly, I consider housekeeping, and all the details of domestic arrangements, the greatest bore in existence."

This colloquy took place between two young men, in the garden of one of the fashionable hotels at Saratoga. It was a sultry afternoon, and they had retired under the shade of an apple tree to digest their dinner, which process they were facilitating by occasionally puffing some very mild, light brown Havana cigars.

The last remarks were uttered in a very calm and positive tone by McNeil, a philosophical and quiet gentleman, who had a most sensible theory for everything in life. Among other things, he took great pleasure in the conviction that he thoroughly understood himself. The first time his interest was truly excited by a member of the gentler sex he had acted in the most extravagant manner, and barely escaped with honor from forming a most injudicious connection.

To guard against similar mishaps he had adopted a very ingenious plan. Being uncommonly susceptible to female attractions, he made it a rule, when charmed by a sweet face or thrilled by a winning voice, to seek for some personal defect or weakness of character in the fair creature, and obstinately dwell upon these defects, until they cast a shade over the redeeming traits, and dissolved the spell he feared.

When this course failed he had but one resource. With Falstaff, he thought discretion the better part of valor, and deliberately fled from the allurements that threatened his peace. Thus he managed not to allow love to take permanent possession, and after various false alarms and exciting vigils, came to the conclusion that no long siege or sudden attack would ever subdue the citadel of his affections.

But McNeil had so braced himself in a spirit of resistance, that he had made no provision against the unconscious lures of beauty. He could chat for hours with a celebrated belle, and leave her without a sigh; he could smile at the captivating manners which overcame his fellows. Regarding society as a battle-field, he went thither armed at all points, resolved to maintain his self-possession, and be on the watch against the wiles of woman. He had seen lovely girls in the drawing-room, followed their graceful movements in the dance, heard them breathe songs of sentiment at the piano, and walked beside them on the promenade. On these occasions, he coolly formed an estimate of their several graces, perfectly appreciated every finely-chiseled nose and tempting lip, noted with care the hue and expression of the eye, but walked proudly away at parting murmuring to himself, "All this I see, yet am not in love."

But who can anticipate the weapon that shall lay him low, or make adequate provision against the inexhaustible resources of love? McNeil had sat for a week at table, opposite an invalid widow and her daughter. He had passed them potatoes not less than a dozen times, and helped the young lady twice to cherry pie. The only impression he had derived from their demeanor and appearance was that they were very genteel and quiet. On the morning after his conversation in the garden he awaked just before sunrise, and found himself lying with his face to the wall, in one of the diminutive chambers in which visitors at the Springs are so unceremoniously packed. His eyes opened within six inches of the plaster; and he amused himself for some minutes in conjuring the cracks and veins it displayed into imaginary forms of warriors and animals. At length his mind reverted to himself and his present quarters.

"Well, I've been here just a fortnight," thus he mused, "and a pretty dull time I've had of it. Day after day, the same stupid routine. In the morning I swallow six glasses of congress water at the spring, with the hollow eyes of that sick minister from Connecticut glaring on me like a serpent, and the die-away tones of that nervous lady from Philadelphia sounding like a knell in my ears. I cannot drink in peace for those everlasting Misses Hill, who all three chatter at once, and expect me to be entertaining and talkative so early in the morning, with my stomach full of cold liquid, and a long day in perspective! Then comes breakfast. The clatter of plates, the murmur of voices, the rushing of the black waiters, and the variety of steams, make me glad to retreat. I find a still corner of the piazza, and begin to read, but the flies, a draught of air, or the intrusive gabble of my acquaintances, utterly prevent me from becoming absorbed in a book. It has now grown too warm to walk, and I look in vain for Dr. Clayton, who is the only man here whose conversation interests me."

"I avoid the billiard-room because I know who I shall meet there. The swing is occupied. The thrumming on the piano of that old maid from Providence makes the saloon uninhabitable. They are talking politics in the bar-room. The very sight of the newspapers gives me a qualm. I involuntary begin to doze when that infernal gong sounds the hour to dress. No matter; anything for relief. Dinner is insufferable; more show and noise than relish and comfort. How gladly I escape to the garden and smoke! That reminds me of what I told Jones yesterday about matrimony. He laughed at me. But there's no mistake about it. Catch me to give up my freedom and provide for a family—be pestered with a whole string of new connections, when I can't bear those I have now—never have a moment to myself—be obliged to get up in the night for a doctor—have to pay for a boys schooling, and be plagued to death for my pains—be bothered constantly with bad servants—see my wife loose her beauty, in a twelvemonth from care—my goddess become a household drudge—give up cigars—keep precise hours—take care of sick children—go to market! never, never, never!"

As his revery thus emphatically terminated, McNeil slowly raised himself to a sitting posture, in order to ascertain the state of the weather, when a sight presented itself which at once put his philosophy to flight, and startled him from his composure. He did not cry out, but hushed his very breath. Beside him lay a female form in profound slumber. Her hair had escaped from its confinement, and lay in the richest profusion around her face. There was a delicate glow upon the cheeks. The lips were scarcely parted. The brow was perfectly serene. One arm was thrust under her head, the other lay stretched upon the coverlid. It was one of those accidental attitudes which sculptors love to embody. The bosom heaved regularly. One felt that it was the slumber of an innocent creature, and beneath that calm breast beat a kindly and pure heart. McNeil bent over this vision, for so at first it seemed to him, as did Narcissus over the crystal water. The peaceful beauty of that face entered his very soul. He trembled at the still regularity of the long, dark eye-lashes, as if it were death personified.

Recovering himself, all at once something familiar struck him in the countenance. He thought awhile, and the whole mystery was solved. They occupied the adjoining chamber; she had gone down stairs in the night to procure something for the invalid, and, on returning, entered in the darkness the wrong room, and fancying her mother asleep, had very quietly taken her place beside her, and was soon soon lost in slumber. No sooner did this idea take possession of McNeil than with the utmost caution and a noiseless movement remove every vestige of his presence into a vacant apartment opposite, leaving the fair intruder to suppose she alone had occupied the room. At breakfast he observed the mother and daughter whisper and smile together, and soon ascertained that they had no suspicion of the actual state of the case. With the delicacy that belonged to his character, McNeil inwardly vowed to keep the secret for ever in his own breast.

Meantime, with much apparent hilarity, he prepared to accompany Jones to Lake George. His companion marvelled to perceive this unwonted gaiety wear off as they proceeded in their ride. McNeil became silent and pensive. The evening was fine, and they went upon the lake to enjoy the moonlight. Jones sung his best songs and woke the echoes with his bugle. His friend remained silent, wrapt in his cloak, at the boat's stern. At last, very abruptly he sprung up, and ordered the rowers to land him. "Where are you going?" inquired Jones. "To Saratoga," was the reply. "Not to-night, surely?" "Yes, now, this instant." Entertaining some fears of his friend's safety, Jones reluctantly devoted that lovely night to a hard ride over a sandy road, instead of lingering away its delightful hours on the sweet bosom of the lake.

Six months after, McNeil married the widow's daughter, and the ensuing summer, when I met him at Saratoga Springs, he assured me he found it a delightful residence.

A REMINISCENCE OF SOTHERN.

How the Practical Joker was Hoaxed in New Orleans in 1876.

The recent demise of E. A. Sothern, the actor, has brought again before the public numerous stories of his practical jokes, to which he was frequently given. As is well known, says the New Orleans Democrat, he would sacrifice almost anything to gratify his taste for fun, and he spared no friend in his love for laughter. When he came to our city for his last engagement in 1876 it was determined among a number of gentlemen here that for once the tables should be turned and the joker should be joked. It was known that they had a keen and shrewd spirit to deal with, and so the plan had to be laid with some ingenuity.

At first it was suggested to inveigle him into a pretended quarrel and call him out, using nothing but powder in the weapons, but it was feared that this would be discovered. After some cogitation a plan was settled upon. It was known that in the company was Mr. J. Cheeves Goodwin, a young gentleman for whom Mr. Sothern entertained the warmest affection, and in whose future he was deeply interested. The plot was to have a challenge sent to Mr. Goodwin, who as a good comedian would enact his part and get Mr. Sothern out early in the morning to see his company apparently disbanded by the shooting of one of its leading lights. Mr. Goodwin entered with a zest into the scheme. The seconds were chosen and all the preliminaries arranged. At 12 o'clock Mr. J. A. Quintero presented himself on the Varieties stage, armed with a ferocious-looking document purporting to be a challenge to Mr. Goodwin, just as the company were at rehearsal.

Mr. G. the night before had informed all of the troupe that he had grown warm in a discussion relative to the respective merits of English and American actors, and that he anticipated trouble. All expressed deep concern about the matter, and when Mr. Quintero stepped upon the stage, Sothern, in the act of giving his lines, stopped short. Mr. Goodwin was asked for, and when pointed out, in a very serious manner Mr. Quintero approached him and handed him the letter in a huge envelope. Mr. Goodwin acted the part well. His hand trembled as he broke the seal, his countenance gave evidence of great mental excitement, and turning to his visitor, said, in a broken voice: "I refer you to my friend, Mr. R. H. Wilde, who will act for me." The ladies knew at once what was the occasion of the visit, and at least one of them had to retire to the green room from nervous excitement. There was no more rehearsal that day. Sothern went up to Goodwin and begged him to compose himself, saying he would try and arrange the matter, and grew very much excited when told it had gone too far.

That evening, at the rotunda of the St. Charles Hotel, the pretended seconds met to select weapons, etc. Sothern had refused to eat any dinner, and had devoted the afternoon to earnest conversation with Goodwin and learning from him the condition of his finances. At 6:30 o'clock the seconds met and bowed coldly to one another while Sothern was looking on, and while the principals stood apart scowling at each other. In a few minutes it was settled that the weapons should be pistols, and the distance ten paces, at the fair grounds.

After the performance that night Sothern remained up with Goodwin until nearly daylight, giving what cheering words he could to the supposed victim. Goodwin wrote his will and placed it in Sothern's hands, sent messages to his relatives and went through all the usual perparations of a man about to take his final exit from the world's stage. According to Goodwin, Sothern shed tears when he retired for a short nap, as he had to get up at 5 o'clock to go out on the field with Goodwin.

The morning of Dec. 1, 1876, dawned in bitter coldness and an ashen-grey sky. A blustering north wind was blowing that made the fingers and ears tingle, and it was altogether as gloomy a day-dawn as could well be prepared for such an occasion.

At just 6 o'clock Col. James Lingan and Don Jose A. Quintero entered the fair grounds arm in arm with their principal, Mr. C. E. Whitney, and in a few moments Mr. Sothern and Mr. Wilde arrived with Mr. Goodwin. As surgeons, there were Dr. Warren Stone for Mr. Whitney, and Dr. Joe T. Scott for Mr. Goodwin. The ground was measured and the pistols loaded with a goodly charge of powder and wadding. Sothern stood in the background talking to the surgeons. He was much agitated at the display of amputating saws, knives, etc., purposely exhibited. He paced up and down restlessly, and asked the doctors whether bloodshed could not be averted.

One shot was fired without effect, and another was demanded. This startled Lord Dundreary. He thought one shot was enough, and he hurriedly turned to Dr. Scott, and said: "Good God, doctor, what sort of a country is this? Isn't one shot enough?" The doctor told him it was entirely in the hands of the seconds. After the second shot, of course, no one was hurt. This was more than Sothern could stand. He begged the two doctors to interfere. He said that it was butchery, and, pale with excitement, he pleaded that they should use their influence to prevent another shot. The hoax had taken a hold on Sothern much greater than was anticipated, and all were satisfied that revenge was had for all his practical jokes.

He spoke of the future of young Goodwin, his family, etc., and the doctors, bubbling almost with laughter, had to keep straight faces and playfully handle probes and scalpels. When it was seen that it had gone as far as desired, the seconds pronounced honor satisfied, and according to agreement the whole party left the Fair Grounds in a body. Just as they made their exit the great fire of Esplanade street broke out, which devastated squares, and Mr. Sothern watched the conflagration until noon.

He was not told of the joke until that night, when he became quite angry, and Goodwin feared he might lose his friendship for the part he had taken. Sothern never got over the hoax, and, like many practical jokers, he felt chagrined at being sold himself.

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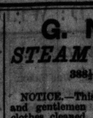

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