

PROTAPLASTIC.

The things that I shall here relate
Are true, but I can't fix their date.
Upon a time it once befel
(Exactly when I cannot tell),
Before the moon was yet begun,
And earth was only partly done;
When Jupiter was still unknown,
And Saturn did not have a zone.
The sun had scarce begun to glare,
And comets skurried through the air,
Colliding with portentous crack
No sign of any zodiac.
When Africa and Spain still met,
And Britain was no island yet;
When on the site where London stands
There roamed the very strangest bands
Of animals with oddest frills—
Like those in Barnum's Circus bills—
When Greenland's bears sufficed to kill,
And icebergs flourished in Brazil;
When reptiles having wings and feet,
With bodies long as Chestnut Street,
Were trying to inhale the breeze
Beneath the giant mushroom trees;
When monstrous ferns around, in sight,
Were changing into anthracite—
In short, ten billion years ago—
What month it was I do not know.

Two monkeys walked out, arm in arm,
Around the North Pole, where 'twas warm,
And every thing was in a stew,
From cressets and volcanoes too.
Not common monkeys, like you see
Enjoy the organ's melody,
But splendid creatures, like the two
Chimpanzees that were in our Zoo.
But though they both were well and hale,
No trace had either of a tail.
They neither fought, nor scratched, nor bit,
They simply talked with sense and wit
Upon a most important thing,
And then they called upon their King—
A huge baboon—of course a male,
With monstrous arms and curly tail.
And having sunk upon their knees,
Or hinder elbows—if you please—
The elder opened his mouth and said:
"Oh, King! long after we are dead
An upright race will rule the earth,
But who'll from us derive their birth?
The best of us, to keep alive
(The fittest only will survive),
Must do the things that suit the climate,
And do them at the proper time.
My mate and I our tails have lopped
Because that fashion will be stopped.
As going naked will be rough,
They'll wrap their bodies up in stuff.
We now propose to shave our hair,
Because these monkeys will be bare—
I mean this new and ruling race
Will all be bare—at least in face.
And so to you, O gracious King,
Our humble prayers now we bring—
That you will order every ape,
And monkey too, whatever his shape,
To do as we, and not to fail.
To shave his body, lop his tail;
To help—in getting up this MAN—
The natural selection plan."
The King waxed very wrath and grim,
He deemed the insult meant for him.
He glanced at both his tail and coat—
For he was hairy as a goat—
And drawing in a furious breath,
He threatened them with instant death
Unless at once they'd quit his sight.
And all the court said: "Serve them right!"
But what revenge time will bring
The progeny of court and king
The forests of the tropics fill,
But all of them are monkey's still.
The excited monkey and his madam
Became the ancestors of Adam.
The line of Eve I can't connect—
Her ancestry seems indirect—
For though she came from Adam's side,
Yet all the monkey's might have died.
I therefore leave the women out
A matter which is still in doubt—
But on this point I'm firm as rock
That men are all of monkey stock.

HAMISH.

ACROSS THE GULF.

The Rev. William Imlay found a seat for his mother in the Desbrosses Street ferry-boat and placed her neat satchel and umbrella beside her. "I think," he said, "I will go forward into the fresh air at the bow."

"Take care of the draughts, William." He folded his big yellow silk neckerchief more closely about his throat, lifted his hat, and left her. The other women were bothering their escorts as to the chances of catching the train for Philadelphia, but Mrs. Imlay was calm. Neither she nor William had ever been late for a train or a meal; a glance at her would tell you that. Smooth gray hair, inquisitive black eyes, close-fitting black travelling-dress, white cuffs, jet brooch and buttons,—there she was, a neat, compact package of fulfilled duties. She would be smiling, efficient, and confident by a sick bed, or in her pantry, or leading a prayer-meeting; and you could not but fancy that if Death tapped at the little lady's door the call would not flurry her at all, as it does disorderly people, but would fit nicely into her methodic life, and she would trip on into heaven still smiling, efficient, and confident.

Mr. Imlay came back presently, a faint curiosity kindling his handsome features: "Mother, the famous actress is on board,—Mlle. Clemence. That is she, coming this way. I thought you would like to see her."

"So I should, William," hastily putting on her spectacles. "The tall woman in the seal-skin ulster! Dear! dear! That ulster would cost as much as your salary for two years! Satan's wages are high nowadays."

"Yes."
"Poor thing! poor thing!" said his mother. This was one of the women, she thought, of whom Solomon wrote, who stand in wait to drag men down into hell. Still, she could not forget that she was a woman and when a child had perhaps been innocent.

"She is very handsome," said Mr. Imlay. His mother moved uneasily. Of course, she saw the creature's beauty; but she ought to

have been nothing to William but a lost soul. "Something in her features reminds me of Miss Lowry," he said, deliberately bridging his nose with his eye-glasses.

"Oh, William! Clara Lowry is one of the loveliest of Christian characters! And yet—Really, there is something about the chin—For pity's sake, never tell Clara of it!"

"Of course not."
The boat thumped into the pier, and the crowd poured through the station into the waiting train. Mrs. Imlay, on her son's arm, peered curiously about for the seal-skin ulster. The sight of this woman had strangely fluttered her. It was a glimpse into that brilliant wicked hell below the decorous world in which she lived, to which pertained all of Satan's doings.—cards, fashion, dancing, and, above all, theatres. "Where did she go, William?" she asked, as he seated her in a car.

"Into a parlour-car behind. There were two or three gentlemen with her. Leading people. Congressmen."

"Oh, I suppose so," with a shudder. "Sit down, dear. Well, I'm really glad to have seen her. One ought to be reminded that there are such depths, here, just about us. I do wonder what she was thinking of then!" It was the very question she had asked about the sea-lion in the Park yesterday.

"She made a very pretty picture, at any rate," said Mr. Imlay. "Remarkably good nose."

"You think a great deal too much of her nose. I mean—I beg your pardon, my dear. But one hardly expects a clergyman to regard such creatures from the stand-point of their noses."

Mr. Imlay lifted his brow with mild complacency. "They are entirely outside of our world," he explained. "A person in my position must either try to convert them or else simply regard them aesthetically as part of the world's furniture. I could not convert Mlle. Clemence on the boat, so I regard her quite as I would a tree or a bit of china. I approve their shape or colour, and I approve her nose. Do I make myself clear?"

"Oh, quite,—quite so, William," hastily rejoined Mrs. Imlay as soon as the gentle dog-matic ripple stopped. She had not heard him; she was always sure William would say the right thing. She was counting the cost of that dress,—ulster, gold-mounted satchel—why, the boots even, could not be bought under twenty dollars! What would Clara Lowry say when told about it? "I always gain new ideas when I leave home, William," she said. "Travel is so—so broadening."

"I wish you would go oftener with me, mother," he replied, affectionately wrapping her shawl about her and rising. "Now, if you will excuse me, I will go and look for Brother Far-duce; he is somewhere on the train."

Mr. Imlay could not find his fellow-minister, but he sat down in a rear car. He wished to think over his sermon, for it would be late before he reached Baltimore. He smiled to himself again at his mother's idea of travel. A trip to New York! She was shut in too much to her little round; church, the sewing-circle, Ann the cook,—there was her world.

Mr. Imlay had gone twice to the great Church Conventions: he had been as far south as Louisville, and as far west as Chicago; so that he could justly claim to know the world and life. He wanted to know more. His own mild dogmatizing, his mother's amiable gossip, the squabbles between the choir and congregation, even the discussion about the new organ, grew stale and cramping to him. If he could get outside, into the creeds, the passions, the action, out there, he fancied he could understand Christ and His errand better. Still, there was great peril in such ventures. As now, for instance, when he buttoned up his coat to hide his white cravat and began to talk to a gentleman in a mulberry velvet waistcoat about beet-sugar, he felt that he was boldly treading on dangerous ground. To hide the cravat, to give up the precedence of his holy calling, to talk as one ordinary man with another,—was not this compounding with Mammon?

But he soon became keenly interested in his beet-sugar friend and his companions. He gathered that they were a family or party of friends on their way to celebrate somebody's birthday. All of them, even to the grandmother, had the air of happy folk out on a frolic. There were a couple of lads who swaggered like old sportsmen, though neither blood nor powder had ever soiled their gams or embroidered game-bags.

There were young girls with rosy faces under furry caps, chattering and giggling, peeping at each other's skates. There was a dumpling of a baby, which the nurse carried about perpetually from one set of cousins to another. There was a white-whiskered old gentleman on the next seat to him, who scolded because the stove-door was shut, or because the ventilators were open, or because the banana-boy dropped books on his knee. Mr. Imlay could not at first understand the patience of the whole party toward this disagreeable old fellow; they were as gentle with him as with the baby; but presently he saw that he was blind.

He finally turned his ill-humour on Mr. Imlay's companion. "Beet-sugar now, Sperry?" he snapped. "Last year it was tea-plants; and the year before, silk-worms. If it was only your own money that was wasted, less matter. But you must always have somebody to ride your hobbies. Here's Mrs. Finn, now! To my knowledge, she gave up two acres once to your tea-plants."

A little woman wearing black and a widow's

cap looked up and laughed: "And, to my knowledge, Uncle Shannon, many a cup of tea you had from them."

"Poor stuff, Emily, poor stuff! You're a shrewd farmer; but you'll never make tea pay. Nor any of John Sperry's whims. Mushrooms! That was another craze of his."

Mr. Sperry patted the old man on the back, and winked apologetically to Mr. Imlay as for an ill-mannered child: "Yes, mushrooms. There's no better paying crop. I set Frazier at them in San Diego, and Cobb in Honolulu, and old Rice in Australia. I may say I have gilled the earth with mushrooms." Then, in a deprecating whisper to the clergyman: "One of the best-tempered men alive until—touching his own eyes significantly. Mr. Imlay nodded, smiled, and rose to go with a regretful glance about the car. How many good Christian people there were in the world to whom one must give a touch and go-by!

When he reached the door, only the engine was in front of him. The rest of the cars, and his mother in them, had vanished.

"Just divided the train at Newark," curtly explained the conductor. "Other section's twenty minutes ahead."

"But I have a lady in my charge."

"Can't help that, sir. You ought to have looked out for the lady."

Mr. Imlay stared at the man, opened his mouth irresolutely, and feebly pulled at his whiskers.

"What is it? what is it?" cried the blind man. "Some new trick of that infernal corporation?"

Mr. Sperry came up, pulling down his waistcoat with a business air, and suggested a telegram: the girls looked sympathetic; Mrs. Finn timidly ventured an anxious word or two.

"It's really of no consequence," said Mr. Imlay with awkward dignity. "My mother has her ticket and check." But secretly he was greatly pleased. He had suddenly become of importance. By virtue of his misfortune he was adopted by this demonstrative family as one of themselves.

While he talked to the conductor his seat had been taken by a boy and a tall, distinguished-looking girl. The blind man put his hand on her head. "Is this you, Jane? Did you get on at Newark? Why don't you make room for me?"

"I'll go in the smoking-car," the boy said, jumping up.

"No, Bob. You'll stay just here." The young lady drew her father into the seat, and took Bob on her lap, looking laughingly into his eyes as with her firm white fingers she poked a cigar out of his pocket.

Bob chuckled sheepishly, but soon recovered himself: "Father, I'm going to take Jane out rabbit-hunting to-morrow. I'll lend her my boots for the deep snow."

Mr. Shannon gave an impatient grunt: "Your sister will have no time for such capers, sir. All my clothes need mending." He settled himself with his head on her shoulder and was soon asleep, while Bob sat, giggling and scowling, on her knees.

Sperry saw that Mr. Imlay was watching the group. "Pitiful sight, sir," he whispered. "I've known that since Mr. Shannon lost his sight that girl has supported both him and the boy; carries them both right along. They're helpless as two babies."

"How does she do it? She is very young."

"Earns barely ten dollars a week. She's with Kneedles. His plan is to work your people to death like cart-horses and fling the carcasses out. Oh, I suppose everybody's heard of Dan Kneedles? We're all going to Mrs. Finn's farm to celebrate her birthday, and I wrote to Dan to beg Jane for a day or two. Well, sir, I had to pay him her full week's salary! But she knows nothing of that."

Kneedles! Mr. Imlay had a feminine relish for gossip. Was there not a Kneedles female-college near Newark? The young lady was dressed like an ill-paid teacher. She coughed, too, now and then, and had a hectic flush; but there was something steadfast and durable about her, from the firm wrist which held Bob quiet, to the dark, slow-moving eyes.

While he was looking at her, there was a rasping crash: girl, old man, seas, roof, tilted, disappeared. Mr. Imlay clutched wildly at Sperry, missed him, and was hurled forward. When he came to his senses he was in absolute darkness, his right leg clinched tightly; beside him he felt broken planks and something soft and movable like a human body. A wind of heat blew over his leg. The train had fallen from a trestle bridge, and he was fastened in a car that was on fire. He had read of people fastened in just that way. They had been roasted to death.

"Great God! This thing is happening to me! Me!" thought Mr. Imlay. He had been so coddled and petted by his mother from the days of his swaddling-clothes up into his clerical coat and neck-tie, that blank amazement was his principal emotion at finding himself in a ditch of mud to the chin, with a fire close at his legs. At a distance on the snowy field, he saw black figures moving; he heard shouts and cries. He shouted, but his voice piped thin like a woman's. The body beside him—whether man's or woman's he did not know—struggled.

"Are they coming to us?" said a voice sounding oddly calm to his frenzy. He replied only by fresh shrieks. "Oh, they'll come," cheerfully. "I saw Bob help father out. They'll come back for me."

It was the teacher, then! He did not care who it was. He shrieked on. "The fire is

gaining," he said at last, exhausted, "and my leg is wedged in tight."

She began to tug wildly at the leg; it did not stir. Then steps came near, and a dozen men crowded up, peering in at the window.

The fire sent a sharp lash of flame across Mr. Imlay's foot. "Help, help! Take me out!" he yelled.

"There's a woman in there," cried somebody outside.

"Jane! Jane! Shannon!" shouted Sperry.

"I'm here! All right! I'm not hurt!" Her cheerful tone maddened Mr. Imlay.

"For God's sake, save me!" he cried; "I'm roasting to death!"

"Here, Jane!" Mr. Sperry smashed in the window. "Now, men, out with the lady!"

But she pushed Mr. Imlay forward: "His leg is fast. He's burning! Get this beam off his leg!" she cried, tugging at it herself.

Mr. Sperry had an axe; the men grappled the beam; it shook and moved. Mr. Imlay dragged at his leg. "Oh, it's broken!" he moaned.

A flap of fierce flame struck between him and the window, shutting him into this horrible death. He hurled himself forward like a madman, thrusting back the woman: "Save me. Me!"

He heard himself. It was a woman that he was pushing back into the fire,—he, William Imlay. "Take her out," he said, in a voice that was almost cool, helping to push her out himself. He was unconscious when they got him through the window.

When he opened his eyes it was with a nausea of pain. He lay in a large, gayly-furnished chamber. A red-haired little man was at work at his leg. Miss Shannon stood beside him, holding bandages, while Mr. Sperry, a kerosene lamp in one hand, with the fat fingers of the other patted him consolingly: "Tut, tut! Come to yourself, eh! Nearly through with your leg. Bad sprain. No bones broken."

"Where am I?"

"At Emily Finn's. You ought to thank the good God you're anywhere." He stooped for a second, then went on cheerfully: "Two of us were killed,—the baby and Tom; the little chap with the gun, you know? Well, what they were fitter to go than us old sinners, I reckon. Bob had his head cut. So we brought you and him here."

"It's very kind of Mrs. Finn," glowing about for her in his writhings of pain with dignified politeness.

"Bah! What else would you have the woman do? She's in the kitchen, making you a hot toddy. Nothing like hot toddy after a shock."

"Steady with that light," snapped the doctor.

"Now, to Jane, 'drop the lotion.' The lotion fell cool on the cracked skin. Jane watched each drop anxiously. The bed was soft; a delicious sense of repose, of being cared for, stole over him. The one lesson of his life, so far, had been that he ought to be cared for.

The doctor, before he left, gave his directions to Jane. Sperry began to blow up the woodstove upon the hearth. Mr. Imlay asked for a drink of water, and Jane brought it to him. Her gown was still soaked with the mud of the ditch, but her head and throat seemed to him purer and finer from the dirty folds out of which they rose. Instead of taking the drink, he stared at her. "You tried to make them pull me out first," he said. "I heard you."

"Did I?" smiling. "It's all a blur to me. Nobody knew what they did."

"You, at any rate, did the right thing! She had forgotten his part in the affair, then? Should he keep quiet and let it go at that? He took the water and drank it. But he could not be quiet. Something within him (not the immaculate William Imlay) was crying out in agony of shame and degradation. As he gave her back the glass he looked her full in the face: "I acted like a hound down there. I think I must have been mad. I wish you could forget it."

She fairly stammered in her hurry to stop him. "Hush! hush! Don't blame yourself. The fire, had you fastened in,—it was enough to craze anybody."

What a noble creature she was! He would never forget how she had tugged at that beam. If Jane had been forty, and lean and scrawny, probably he might have forgotten it.

Mr. Sperry caught an inkling of what they were saying. After Jane was gone he came up: "Most unselfish soul alive. She'd have done just the same for you if you had been a tramp or a dork. What would you like for supper?"

"I want no supper," said Mr. Imlay curtly, turning over.

Would she have done the same for a tramp or a dork? He did not believe it.

It was not the pain in his leg that kept him awake that night, nor even the shame of having acted like a brute before these good Christian people, though that was sore too. It was the sudden sight of the brute within him, which he saw for the first time in his life. He tried to put it out of sight, to recall that Reverend William Imlay whom he had known so long, walking up the aisle of the Third Church, irreproachable, from the Greek features, set in neat English whiskers, to the sermon he preached. Well, what was this man Imlay? He preached generosity, self-sacrifice, high thinking and living to others, and went home to be pampered by his mother and Ann, to find the day spoiled if his toast was too dry or his shirt-collar too limp. Was he nothing but a cheat and a hypocrite.