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Poetry.

THE SINGING OF THE SHELL.

What is the song, love, tell to me
That the morning sea shall sigh to thee;
Is it the song of the restless tide,
And the dash of the billows breaking wild?

The song I hear is low and faint,
Like the thought of a weary saint,
Like the falling of sleep on a weary brain,
When the fevered heart is quiet again.

I know the shell and love its eye,
Thou art hearing more than prayer or sigh;
Thou art speaking to hearts that could
For us, not this, is its story told.

I hear the wind on a boat's main,
Moan like the fast of a vanishing pain;
But I hear no words in their murmured tune,
But I hear no words in their murmured tune.

If it does not say that I love thee well,
It is a senseless, ill-sounding, worn-out shell;
It is not of love, why sigh or sing?
It is a common, mechanical, useless thing.

Whisper of love is a prophet shell,
Of a peace that comes, and all shall be well;
It speaks not a word of your love to me,
But it tells me to love you eternally.

LITERATURE.

A TRUE STORY OF PERIL.

WHEN I was foreman of the larboard, or chief mate's boat, in the Druid, we lowered one afternoon in chase of a school of "sixty-barrel bulls" on what was known to the initiated as the "Middle Ground," between Australia and New Zealand. We made fast to one of the whales, a lively fellow, who ran us something of a dance before we succeeded in giving him his first lead.

But, all this time, our steel had been running to leeward, and, meanwhile, the captain had struck another, and the ship kept her full, so as to support the windward boats. The second mate also kept near the captain, and when our whale "went in his fluke," which was not until nearly sundown, we could make out from the maneuvers of the ship that the boats were to windward of her. At such a distance from us, they were invisible, owing to our low position at the surface of the sea; but those on board the Druid, one of whom remained constantly at the masthead, had the run of us all, at least so long as daylight continued.

The sun was just dipping, when we got a hole cut in our whale's rib-side, and a strap rove for towing. A dark cloud-bank was settling down in the weather horizon, out of which a strong wind might be expected at short notice. An attempt, with a single boat, to tow the whale to windward, would be better fully there was nothing for us to do but to either give up our prize or to wait the movements of the ship. We saw her stand on until full down, then tack, and soon afterward, haul the courses up, and swing the headyards black, a signal that she was about taking the captain's whale alongside. Some boats were aloft, at the same time, securing the light sails, and the topsails were allowed to run down on the cap.

The mate looked anxiously at the ship, and at the threatening aspect of the weather; then at the sixty-barrel bull, the prize that we had fought so hard to win, and he seemed to say, for a time, to make up his mind what course to pursue.

"What do you think of it, Beers?" said he, at last, to his boatswain, with the manner of one who wishes to divide the responsibilities with counselors.

Beers was a veteran whaler of African descent and bottle-green complexion, old enough to have been the father of his superior officer.

Well, I don't, sir, it looks kind of dubious to hang on here. The ship went run off the wind, till she gets that whale fluked; and I don't know as she will then. And there'll be a change of weather within an hour, to job the weather.

And it'll be dark in less than an hour, added the mate. If there was a prospect of fair weather, I wouldn't care for the darkness, because we could keep the run of each other's lights; but as it is, I think we'd better wait the whale, and get to the ship while we have daylight.

A hole was cut in the body of the whale, and the "waik," a flag attached to a slender spruce staff—inserted: our line was cast off from the tow-ropes, and the order given to pull ahead, the boat's head being laid to windward, on a bearing for the ship, then some four miles off.

I don't know what the old man will think of our judgment, in leaving the whale, mattered the mate, using the word "our" as a salvo, like most people under similar circumstances; though he had acted for himself, except to far as his judgment had been fortified by the hints of Beers.

We were all glad enough, it must be confessed,

to abandon the whale and consult our own safety. It was very early in the voyage, and no similar emergency had before occurred. We had seen just enough of the interest of the voyage was concerned.

Consequently the mate, a very young officer, felt a keen responsibility, and an equally keen anxiety to learn how his course would be judged.

It was quite dark when we pulled up under the lee of the Druid within hail; but the black squall still hung, threatening in the sky, and there had been as yet no actual change in the weather. The ship had her helm up, and was just in the act of paying off, while the signal-lantern was swaying and flickering at the mizen-mast.

But aloft, roared the captain, sharply, as soon as he perceived our approach. Who is there, Mr. Andrews?

Ay, ay, sir!

Where's your whale?

Two points forward of your lee-beam—four miles off!

What is the — did you leave him?

The mate made no reply to the question, until the boat was secured alongside by her warp, and he had jumped in on the quarter deck. The ship continued swinging off until her head was pointed in the right direction, but with her topsails on the cap, at one whole fluke, towing alongside, her progress was not very rapid.

We didn't think it prudent to lie by, said Mr. Andrews, in his apologetic tone, as the ship was so far from us, and every prospect of bad weather. We didn't think it prudent to lie by, said Mr. Andrews, in charge of your own boat. The real didn't ship to think!

I know it, sir, but in case of an emergency it may be well enough to consult those who are sharing the risk with you.

Cor! will be! Of course Jack will always say, "Sign my name!"—cut away the whale, and we'll pay for it! And there's sixty barrels of sperm oil gone to the devil. You might as well look for a needle in a haystack now. It won't do for us at the outset of the voyage, to throw away a chance like that. We must run a little risk sometimes—that's what we all shipped for.

This taunting language had the effect which might have been expected upon the young mate.

Well, I'll bet I can run as much risk as any live man of my inches, if you think it prudent to do so, but I had charge of other men's lives, as well as my own, and I should feel just as responsible to you and them, if I had erred the other way, by venturing too much, and any accident had happened. Haul up the boat here, my crew, and jump in!

Hold on, Mr. Andrews! said the captain. We can run down the best part of the distance with the ship.

When we judged ourselves within a mile or less of where the whale had been left, the ship was brought to the wind again. There had, as yet, been no increase of wind, and though the night was very dark, the bank or squall appeared to have shifted a little, and to have a less heavy appearance than at sundown.

I don't believe but what it'll pass over in a cizzle, said Captain Gibbs. I don't see any change in the barometer. Now, Mr. Andrews, I believe you can find that whale again; I think I could, at any rate.

All right, sir, was the reply, with a nervous twitching that showed how the young man was stung by the words. If you can do it, I can.

He ought to bear, now, three points off the lee bow, were the last words thrown at us, as we cast off from the ship, and prepared to "bout ours." Pull right off her way, and you must fall into his skid, and then you can follow it down.

Setting our light as soon as we were well clear, we passed away into the darkness, leaving our floating home behind, until the dim signal at her gall faded to a mere spark in the distance. It was evident from the air of quiet determination about Mr. Andrews that he would cruise now all night, rather than return to the ship without his whale.

We at the oars had nothing to say about the matter; it was ours simply to obey.

It was long before we found any trace of the "black," but after pulling back and forth over the ground, fearful of passing on one side of it, and getting too far to leeward, we at last were in it; a positive assurance that we still had the weather-gauge of the object of our search. At the same time, a trigger of light flamed up from the side of the ship, made by burning oil scraps on the back arches of the try works, and we made out that she was again keeping off, to be nearer to us.

We pulled lustily now, feeling encouraged by the sign, and still keeping in the skid, followed it as our only guide; for so dark was the night, we could not possibly see the whale until we should be very close upon it.

Old Beers stood up in the head of the boat, looking with all his eyes in his head, to catch a glimpse, either of the waik, or of the "wash" or "white-water," which would indicate the whale's position.

But now there was suddenly a change in

the air, which I can only describe as a sense of dilution or rarefaction, with a sighing sound that was ominous of approaching evil. The wealth of quarter of the heavens, instead of darkening more, appeared to light a little, as the black pall split in two, and parted right and left. Out came a few straggling drops of rain, and then the wind followed with a vengeance.

The first blast struck us with such fury that the mate had enough to do to keep the boat from broaching to, and taking the whole force of it broadside on. We slipped in all the oars as fast as possible, and let her drive to leeward, crouching down in our places, unable to see anything, or to change the course of our light craft, and running blindly off into the blackness.

Our little taper in the boat lantern was extinguished at once, and could be of no further service. We felt, instinctively, that the ship would hold to anchor, as the captain would not run the risk of passing us; and he was, rushing away from her before the gale, and every moment lessening our chances of safety.

There was a sudden flashing of light, as a rifle followed, a signal of recall, of course, but we could neither answer, or obey it!

Forward we rushed, before the wind, striking down the boat, and clinging to the gunwale, as a thwart, all of us but the officer who was at the steering oar to keep her head in the only safe direction. No word was spoken among us, but each fully realized the peril we were in, and each asked himself the question of life or death, how long is this going to last?

It was answered by a shock so sudden as to throw us all together in a confused heap. In a crash of everything movable, and a cracking of the boat's fabric itself, we rolled into the sea, and were overwhelmed. As soon as I regained breath a little, I struck out and groped nothing but a smooth slippery surface, on which I could get no hold, and the next instant was rolled off again, and plunged under the sea.

I had retold the truth, now. In the darkness we had run upon the whale, without having seen it!

At my next attempt, I clutched a rope, which I let at once to be the bite of a whale fluke, and underminding this, I soon came to the pole of an iron harpoon. By this I was enabled to hold on, and after being half drowned in my struggles, I succeeded in drawing a bite of the main line under the whale's fin, until it brought up firmly at the "knuckle."

I could then secure myself upon the whale to avoid sliding off at every roll. The situation was by no means a pleasant one, as I had enough to do to keep my mouth above water.

While I had been thus absorbed in the one object of securing my own temporary safety, the rest of my shipmates had disappeared, nor was anything to be seen or heard of the boat or them either. A light spruce pole and a paddle were cast in my way, and I secured them by cutting holes with my slant knife and passing them, like masts, in the blubber of the whale; but these were all that I could find.

The waik was set in the whale by Mr. Andrews still stood in its place, and this was important, as it might be the means of the ship finding me, could keep alive where I was until the return of daylight. Within half an hour after I secured the landing upon the fluke, the squall was all over, and the wind settled down to a steady moderate breeze.

The heavens were clear overhead, and it was as light as it could be on a moonless night. But I were to my comrades? and of my return to the ship, where was the Druid?

"Light!" I actually sang out the words, but I had just half a pint of beer in my mouth, and shaking my eyes clear, they rested upon a bright light directly in the wind's eye from me. Then there was a blinding flash, and the report of the Druid's old carriage-gun thundered forth, so near as to be startling, and roared with all the voice at my command, which was not much, hoping to make myself heard. Mr. Andrews' light was now, and evidently nearing me. Soon, I could make out the ship's sail in the immediate glare of the light, and then the whole outline of the stout old craft.

My lungs were strained to their utmost power, for my only chance of safety depended on attracting their attention, before they should sweep on beyond me. I left astern unknown to them, there was little or no hope of salvation.

But sharp eyes were on the alert, below and aloft, for they had found the whale's "black," and were following it down. My outcry was heard, and the ship brought rapidly up in the wind, while two boats were dropped into the water, and man and mast as quick as a flash were accomplished.

I was the first to see the waik, and set up my answer, my shout. I was pulled by strong arms from my cramped position into the boat of Captain Gibbs, who, seemingly excited almost to insanity, had come himself on this errand of rescue.

My story, which I told in as few words as possible, excited him still more. We shot

alongside, and I was helped up to the deck, while he was issuing all sorts of urgent orders.

All three boats were soon down, with directions to "spread their chances," and to search thoroughly every foot of "ground," or sea, as they went. A set of signals were agreed upon rapidly, and the ship keepers had their orders issued faster than they could take in their meaning. As the captain sprang down the side again into his boat, I overheard him say in a low bitter tone:

"God help me! Why did I do it?"

And God did help him. Within an hour, the reports of three muskets from the boats told us that the lost ones were "gone"; and strange to say, all were alive, though well nigh exhausted. The boat and alled and rolled bottom up, but all four were saved in climbing upon her bottom, through the superhuman efforts of Mr. Andrews, who, all said, appeared to take his "care of his own life, so that he could save the others. The stranger support of the "cruiser" ones and kept them up on the boat's bottom; but the preservation of the entire crew seems to me miraculous, when I think of it at this present writing. The old colored boat-steerer Beers was almost gone, being, in fact, quite insensible when help arrived.

When the first excitement was over, I saw the captain take Mr. Andrews aside, and heard words which I could not make out, but his voice seemed choked with emotion, and the two stood grasping each other's hand, for some little time, as if their whole souls were in the act. A bond of brotherhood was established between them from that hour, which was broken only with the close of their lives.

We were so fortunate as to find and secure the whale the next day, and in the happy state of feeling consequent upon our good luck the perils of our adventure were soon lost sight of, but upon Captain Gibbs, at least, the lesson of that fearful night was not lost.

Shaving a Millionaire.

Everybody who lives in New Jersey will recollect Billy Gibbons, the millionaire. He was an eccentric man, and numerous stories are told of his freaks.

It seems that Billy, while in a country village, in which he owned some property, stepped into a barber's shop to get shaved. The shop was full of customers and the old gentleman quietly waited for his turn.

A customer who was under the barber's hands when the old gentleman came in, asked the man of the razor, in an undertone, if he knew who that was, and on receiving a negative reply informed him in a whisper that it was "Old Billy Gibbons, the richest man in the State."

"God, said the barber, I'll shave him for his shave!" Accordingly after the old man had the operation performed, he was somewhat surprised upon asking the price, to be told seventy-five cents.

"Seventy-five cents," said he, quietly, "isn't that rather a high price?"

"It's my price," said he of the latter brush, independently, "and as this is the only barber's shop in the place, then as comes into it must pay what I ask."

To the old gentleman this was rather a knock-down argument, for he drew three-quarters of a dollar from his pocket, paid them over to the barber and left the shop.

A short time afterward he was in close conversation with the landlord of a tavern hard by, and the topic of the conversation was barber shops.

"Why is it," said he, "there's only one barber shop in town? There seems to be nearly work enough for two?"

"Well, there used to be two," said the landlord, "till last winter, when this new man came up from the city and opened a new shop, and as everything in it was fresh and new, folks sort of deserted Bill Harrington's shop, which has been going on for nearly fourteen years."

But didn't Bill do good work? Didn't he shave well, and cheap?

"Well, as for that," said the landlord, "Bill did his work well enough, but his shop wasn't on the main street like the new one, and didn't have so many pictures and handsome curtains, and folks got in the way of thinking the new chap was more expensive and brought more city fashions with him, though to tell the truth," said the landlord, striking a chin down with a beard resembling screen wire, "I never saw a lighter touch or a keener razor than Bill Harrington's."

"City fashions—oh?" growled the old man. "So the new man's city fashions shut up the other barber shop?"

"Well, not exactly," said the landlord, "though things never did seem to go well with Bill after the new shop opened; first, one of his little children died of fever; then his wife was sick a long time, and Bill had a big bill to pay at the doctor's; then, as a last misfortune, his shop was burned down one night, brushes, tools, furniture and all, and no insurance."

"Well," said the old man pettishly, "why don't he start again?"

"Start again," said the communicative landlord,

"why, bless your soul, he hasn't got anything to start with."

"H—m! Where does this man live?" asked the old man.

He was directed, and ere long was in conversation with the unfortunate insurer who corroborated the landlord's story.

"Why don't you take the new shop?" said the old man. "There's a new one in the block right opposite the other barber shop."

"What," said the other, "you must be crazy. Why, that block belongs to old Billy Gibbons; he'd never let one of these stores for a barber shop; they are a mighty sight too good; besides, that I haven't got twenty dollars in the world to fit it up with."

"You don't know old Billy Gibbons as well as I do," said the other. "Now listen. If you could have the shop all fitted up rent free, what will you work in it for by the month? What is the best you can live on?"

This proposition somewhat startled the unfortunate hair dresser, who finally found words to stammer out that perhaps twelve or fifteen dollars a month would be about enough.

"Pshaw!" said the old man, "that won't do. Now listen to me—I'll give you that store, rent free, for one year, and engage your services six months, all on these conditions.—You are to shave and cut hair for everybody that applies to you, and take no pay; charge it all to me, and for your services I'll pay you twenty dollars a month, payable in advance, —to commence now," continued he placing ten dollar notes on the table before the astonished barber, who, it is almost unnecessary to state accepted the proposition, and who was still more surprised to learn that it was Billy Gibbons himself that had helped him.

In a few days the inhabitants of that village were astonished by the appearance of a new barber shop far surpassing the other in elegance of appointments, and in which, with new mugs, razors and perfumes, stood a barber and a sister's ready to do duty on heads and hands of the people. Over the door was inscribed, "William Harrington, Shaving and Hair Dressing Saloon."

The people were at first long in ascertaining or slow in availing themselves of the privileges of this establishment, and it is not to be wondered that it was crowded and the other deserted. The other held out for some weeks, suspecting this free shaving—by Bill kept his secret well—was but a dodge to entice customers away, who would soon be charged as usual, charging not a cent for his labor, and having money to spend in the bargain, he came to the conclusion that he must have drawn a prize in the lottery, or stumbled upon a gold mine, and was keeping a barber shop for fun, so he closed the shop in despair and left the place.

Meanwhile, Bill Harrington kept on busy as a bee, and one fine morning his employee stepped in, and without a word sat down and was shaved; in half an hour his seat he asked to see the score for the six months past. The barber exhibited it, and after a careful calculation, the old man said:

"Plenty of customers, eh?"

"Lots of 'em, never did such a business in my life!" said the barber.

"Well," replied Money Bags, "you have kept the account well. I've paid you one hundred and twenty dollars for your services—all right—and there are three hundred and thirty charged for shaving all that applied, now this furniture cost one hundred and two dollars. Have it is. Now you own this business, and are to have the shop rent free six months longer, and all for to do you are to charge the regular price for your work, for your pay stop from to day."

This, of course, the barber gladly assented to.

"But," said the old man, on leaving, "take care that you never cheat a man by charging ten times the usual price for a shave; for it may be another old Billy Gibbons."

STOCKING—"Ma, I think that's real mean of William. I'll go to bite sissy the way he do."

"Bite your sister? Why how silly you talk, child!"

"O yes he does, ma—every time she goes with him to the hall door, when he leaves, she bites his ear, and fixing his scarf, he just bites her right in the mouth!" And he keeps right on fighting for ever so long, though she tries her best with both arms and his neck, to make him stop. And what makes it meaner of him, you know, ma, for sissy is so good to him, too, everytime, and though he must know how much it hurts her, she never screams out once!"

At the Restoration, Charles the Second sent for Milton, and during the interview, indignantly demanded of him if he did not consider his blindness as a punishment inflicted upon him by heaven, for having written against the King, his father?

"If the calamities which befall us in this world," replied the poet, "are sent as punishments for our crimes, how much greater than mine must have been that of the King, your father, for he lost his head, whereas I have only lost my eyes."