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POOR DOCUMENT

THE RIVER'S BOTTOM.

WHAT A DIVER SAW UNDER THE WAVES OF THE HUDSON.

The Floor of the River a Great Mass of Slime—Some of the Sights—Broken Wires, Pipes, Sewage, Etc.—A Dead Man.

In New York city, near the Brooklyn bridge, and visible from the promenade of that great viaduct, is a loft which has long been a favorite headquarters of the professional divers who do business aloug this part of the Atlantic coast. The place is well furnished, cozy and supplied with all the latest ideas in submarine work. Every day it is visited by the divers, who come for new orders for work, to obtain assistance upon some hard task, or to procure supplies for their peculiar calling.

One afternoon while a party of friends, chiefly newspaper men and divers, were chatting over the news of the day, one of the more popular subaqueous toilers entered who had been absent some time from the city. He joined in the conversation, and after nearly every member of the party had related some experience, said: "I do not recall any exciting episode in my career at the present moment, but only the humdrum of my daily career. I suppose, however, that it may interest outsiders and so I give the story of a day's work. Last fall one of the ocean steamers, in approaching her pier, lost a valuable anchor and chain cable through the carelessness or drunkenness of some seamen on board. The captain of the boat was an old friend and he sent for me to recover the property. It was not much of a job, but business was slack and I was glad to get it. We got everything ready and went to work a day or two afterward, about 11 o'clock in the morning. We anchored our boat, got the pump ready, adjusted my armor and down I went. You have an idea that the water is clear like the air, but you are away off. It is dirty, very dirty. Ordinarily you can see about ten feet from you in any direction sideways. Over your head it is a glare. Underneath it is as dark as a cave. With an electrical lamp, the best invention yet made as far as our trade is concerned, you can see twice as far, but it is just like standing by a camp fire in the woods at night time. It makes the surrounding darkness all the darker. I reached the bottom of the Hudson and began walking around. The floor of a great river is not like Broadway, nor even the beach at Coney Island. It is a great mass of ooze or slime, into which you sink sometimes to your knees, sometimes to your waist and sometimes over your head. You do as much work by feeling as by seeing. This day I struck a lot of commonplace things, but under water they interested even me. One was a mass of telegraph and telephone wires from New York to Jersey City. Some were whole and some were broken, probably by the anchors of small vessels that hove to over night just above.

A few of the broken wires still stuck out just as if they had been pulled so by main force. All of the wires showed the effect of their submergence. Some were half rotten, others were beginning to decay or rust. Every one had something attached to it. Little snails, oyster shells, seaweed, eel, grass, rags and other water logged matter from the land were a few of the things attached to the wires. Further on I came across the oil pipe through which the Standard Oil company pumps petroleum direct from the oil wells of Pennsylvania to the great refineries in Brooklyn and Williamsburg. The pipe was stronger and more accurately made than the ordinary gas and water pipes we see in the city. Yet I thought that if some craft got the fluke of its anchor under it and pulled quite hard then it would break short and cover the harbor with crude petroleum. There is a great deal of wood lying around the bed of the river. Contrary to public opinion, wood is not lighter than water. Full of air it is, of course, but when water soaked or logged it nearly always sinks. Its weight is so close to water, though, that it doesn't work its way down into the fine dirt and mud of the bottom. For this reason it is very apt to deceive amateurs and novices.

"There is another thing that divers see under the Hudson, and that is that the river is being filled up through the folly or ignorance of human beings. The great sewers never stop throwing their vile contents into the slips. Every steamer, from tug to ocean greyhound, drops its ashes overboard. Every vessel does the same with its sweepings and refuse. Then the scows, which ought to carry the ashes and garbage of this city far away, save time and trouble by dumping them in dark nights into the Hudson.

"There are not very many fishes in the North river. There may be, but we divers don't see much of them. Probably they see us first and give us a wide berth. Those I meet most are eels and little shiners, or minnows. If, however, we carry one of those new fashioned incandescent lamps it acts like a jack lantern in eel spearing, and brings shoals of fish around. They are horribly unintelligent, and after staying a fellow five minutes and swimming off they will immediately return and begin eyeing him again, as if they had never seen him before. We never mind them, as they are harmless, and couldn't be caught by us even if we desired to get a good mess of them when at work.

"The most unpleasant thing a diver can meet is the dead body of a human being. It is a popular delusion that all drowned men come to the surface after several days. Probably they would if they were left alone and were not attacked by wharf rats, eels and fishes. But in the Hudson they are always attacked in this way within an hour or two after they are submerged. Once attacked that ends it. The breaking of the skin diffuses something, it may be a scent around, and then everything travels for that body to get a square meal. Long before decomposition it is so cut and riddled that what gases are formed have no chance to accumulate and inflate the walls of the abdomen. We divers never touch bodies in this state, because it brings the worst luck possible.

"There is very little romance or beauty about a diver's life. The white sand beaches and coral floors, the brilliant colored fishes and the exquisite forests of the sea that the reading public never weary of in Jules Verne and other lying writers do not exist. It is cold, dark, filthy and dead. The first time you go down there is a novelty and excitement about it which are very pleasant. When these wear off you feel like the grave diggers who every morning go to work in the great cemeteries. You must be quick, alert and sober. You must keep your eyes and ears open and be ready for anything. If you don't you'll probably feed the fishes.—New York Cor. Globe-Democrat.

Labouchere is a victim of rheumatic gout.

The Famous Women's Club.

Not everybody knows just what Sorosis and its purposes are, although it has been more talked of and written about than any organization in New York, at least during its infancy. Yet there are women and men in this city who call themselves intelligent, who frequently ask: "What is Sorosis, anyway? What good does it accomplish? I never hear of its doing any wonderful act of benevolence or reforming anything." These untaught beings assume that a club of ladies could have or should have but one purpose in organizing, and that must be either philanthropic or reformatory.

Sorosis is neither. Its purpose is to enable the intellectual ladies of the city to meet and become better acquainted, and at the same time advance themselves intellectually by the discussion of various topics which could be classed under the head of "culture." Its founders were wise women. They forbade the discussion of religious beliefs and opinions, and the two or three other questions upon which people are prone to get fighting mad. To that wise constitutional provision is due the credit of holding the club together for twenty years, in the face of the widespread belief that women are able disintegrators. It has had its divisions, to be sure, but they have never been violent enough to disrupt the society.—New York Press.

Servants' Tricks in Persia.

The crafts and wiles of the servants are endless and sometimes exceedingly original. One of their most common tricks for obtaining leave of absence is to put on a long face and represent the death of a wife, a brother or a child. One of my servants in this way lost his favorite wife, his father, and his darling litte boy, a chubby, rosy cheeked child, who had appeared once or twice at the legation. On the latter occasion, with eyes suffused with tears, the mourning father requested leave to tarry at the bedside of his sick boy; then came news of the death and permission could not be justly withheld for the funeral ceremonies lasting two days. My sympathy in these distressing circumstances was about to take the form of a pishkesh, when I was informed by another servant who had a grudge against this one that neither wife nor child were dead, but very much alive and in a very healthy condition; and furthermore that the father had, during his absence, been earning a fine present, while drawing wages from me, as assistant at a great entertainment given by a high dignitary. Having fully ascertained the truth of this statement, I felt my sympathy could best find expression by giving the fellow a summary dismissal. But this form of deception was so common as at last to become somewhat "stale, flat and unprofitable."—S. G. W. Benjamin.

Sensitiveness of Wall Street Men.

A wealthy Michigan, worth $1,000,000, paid his first visit to Wall street recently. He makes this comment: "What impressed me in Wall street is the apparent sensitiveness of the men there to exhilaration or fright. They make me think of a flock of pigeons on a tree or in a barnyard. You raise your hand and, whoop, away they go. Some little report came into Wall street the day I was there, and whoop! away went the bulls and bears like a flock of scared pigeons. If I had scared so easily I never would have made any money."

A few minutes later this same man said that he was getting his business into such a shape that after he was 60, which would be three years hence, he could occupy his time in cutting coupons.

"Then," said another gentleman, "when you begin to cut coupons you will be one of that flock of pigeons. The scariest pigeon in the world is the man who has turned his business into stocks and bonds when he old."

The wealthy Michigander spent some moments in deep meditation.—New York Evening Sun.

Scarcity of Wild Animals.

"Another thing which has affected the business a good deal is the growing scarcity of certain kinds of wild animals, and the closing of some of the depots for their collection and exportation. Nubia and upper Egypt, for example, for a long time were the great headquarters for the supply of giraffes, elephants, hippopotami and the double horned rhinoceri, with many other wild animals, but since the troubles there, subsequent to the death of Gen. Gordon at Khartoum, absolutely nothing has been received from this region, which is now barred, for an indefinite period, by the impending Italo-Abyssinian war. And then again the depots in South Africa are beginning to close because the hunters have to go such immense distances before they can reach the lairs of the wild animals, hundreds of miles from their former haunts. The cause of this is the extermination of all kinds by the so called sportsmen, who pour into that region like they did into the United States when the buffaloes roved the plains."—New York Evening Sun.

Henry Bergh's Work.

For twenty-two years, and even longer, Mr. Bergh has devoted his energy and wealth to the amelioration of the condition of the dumb creation. Since that time he has seen the modest society which he founded, and of which he is still the president, become one of the strongest benevolent organizations, not only in this city, but in America, for there is now hardly a state in the Union which does not contain a kindred organization. In thirty-seven states and territories laws forbidding the ill treatment of animals have been passed, and in thirty-four of them societies to carry out their provisions have been organized. Canada, Mexico, Cuba and several South American countries have aided the good work by organizing societies, and the passage of laws is certain to follow. Very few men have ever lived to see the work which they started grow to such colossal proportions, and there is no other reformer now living who has witnessed the spread of his ideas over so vast a territory.—Benjamin Northrop.

Scarcity of Buffalo Robes.

Much has been written about the terrible loss of life in the northwest during the blizzard being due to the scarcity of buffalo robes, which contribute the only defense against the rigors of that country. It is true that a buffalo robe or coat is now beyond the reach of those with slender purses, and it is true that for certain purposes the buffalo hide and fur are superior to any others. This leads me to the suggestion that if some of the great cattle kings of the west would give up raising cattle and go into buffalo farming they would find it an immensely profitable business. Not only would every hide obtainable find a ready sale, but the meat would find a market in the cities, and the refuse of the carcass could be made into the dozen articles of profitable commerce that the steer now affords. —Globe-Democrat.

LOVE AND DEATH.

I cannot speak the word to her disburdened ear,
Nor stir her marble breast, nor challenge one lost tear;
The sound would fall unheard, for my love would not hear.

I cannot speak the word, nor would she understand
The pall that overhangs and darkens all the land,
That stays me when I grasp her dear, unfeeling hand.

If she could know the blight that desolates my heart,
Could she—aye, could she, then, one burning glance impart?
It cannot be—nay, nay, death is a loveless art.

Love burns the glowing cheek, love speaks in flashing word;
Love thrills and thrills again as song note thrills the bird;
Love moans, though it shall know it never will be heard.

So calm and pale she is, like moonlight overhead,
So silent while I weep for one whom heaven has wed;
My heart—my heart will break for my Love lying dead!

—Stephen Henry Thayer in Home Journal.

THE PANCAKE MAKER.

Mary was a pancake maker in a restaurant. It was her duty to stand in a show window on Broadway and pour batter upon the griddle. Thousands of persons stopped before the window every day, and watched Mary as she deftly greased the griddle or with a turn of her hand flopped the pancakes over to be browned on the other side. Mary had been selected for the job because she was pretty. Her selection proved to be a profitable investment for her employer. Those persons who were insensible to the charms of pancakes were not insensible to the attractions of beauty, and so many came in to eat the cakes and to wish that Mary was a waitress as well as a cook.

One day, when the bubbles were rising from the freshly poured batter, and Mary stood waiting with her spatula in her hand, a young man stopped before the window. His dark eyes took in the smoking griddle, the rounded arm above it, and the white brow which was wrinkled in the effort to determine when the cakes were properly done brown. She looked up and their eyes met. Then he passed on. What dark eyes he had! thought Mary. What a nice looking girl that was! thought he. And all day long Mary looked up from the pancakes, half expecting to see those eyes looking into hers. Even the bubbles in the pancakes seemed to take on the expression of his eyes and to look at her from the griddle with a stare of admiration. As for the young man—who was a clerk in a dry goods store—a rounded arm seemed to beckon him to come in and eat pancakes and become saturated with maple sugar.

Every morning he stopped at the window of the restaurant and was greeted with a glance from a pair of bright eyes and an evidently studied desire to be graceful in turning the cakes. After a week had passed he left his boarding house earlier than usual one morning and stopped at the restaurant to get his breakfast. Mary saw him come in. She did not turn her head nor give any sign of recognition, but she listened with bent head and attentive ear for his order. It came like this:

"Some pancakes, please!"

How carefully she poured out that batch upon the griddle! With what an anxious eye she watched the edges harden and the center of the cakes become perforated with holes like those in a sponge! And when the cakes were done to a most delightful brown on one side, she held each one up on her spatula and greased the griddle anew before putting the cakes on again, so that they should not stick to the griddle.

In her eagerness to bake the cakes to a turn she burned one of them, and so in disgust she threw the whole batch away and began once again. Meanwhile she stole a furtive glance at the young man, who was drumming on his plate with his knife and watching admiringly the curve of Mary's graceful neck and the dainty coil of hair on the back of her head, and which Jack wished was against his shoulder. At last the pancakes were done to the fair cook's liking and were placed before Jack. He said to himself, as he cut a section of the full moon of buckwheat:

"Well, I never ate pancakes like those before. They're so light and flaky, and the sirup is real true maple sugar, and not made of watered molasses."

Jack didn't add that the cook was charming, but he thought it all the same. The next batch of cakes which Mary cooked was not as well done as the one Jack was eating. It was perfectly natural that they should not be, for was not Mary anxious to see how he enjoyed them, and did not she make an excuse to leave her post and go to the other end of the restaurant to get a new piece of pork to grease the griddle, so that she might steal a glance at him as she went by? And when Jack had eaten his cakes and had lingered twice as long as usual over his coffee, so that he could feast his eyes as well as his palate, he arose to go and their eyes met for just one fleeting glance. Jack flushed and said to himself that it was caused by the coffee. Mary's face was tinged with crimson, but of course it was due to the heat of the griddle. And so the days came and went. Each was attracted to the other by the loadstone of love. Each one fearful to make overtures to the other for fear that the illusion would be dispelled. But the mysterious alchemist was busy mixing the sweet potion which each of these young hearts drank. The potion in Mary's heart conjured up visions of what a glorious man Jack must be as she lay awake at night in the dark with her eyes wide open. Then she closed her eyes tight, and thought of him as a mailed knight clanking into the restaurant to refresh himself with a plate of pancakes and a cup of coffee ere he started out in search of his heart's desire. "But I'm afraid he don't care for me," thought Mary, opening her eyes again in fear. "I saw him smile at Miss Bellows today." And so between her hopes and her fears Mary fell asleep and dreamed of pancakes and her favorite customer, and only awoke when the sun was shining in the window, and she hurried down to the restaurant so that she might see her knight as soon as possible and catch a glance from his dark eyes.

In the meantime Jack had not been idle. He had cultivated the acquaintance of the proprietor of the restaurant. By careful questioning he had learned that Mary was one of the many girls who had been rescued by the Five Points mission when she was a mere child. Mary's mother had died in a tenement in Baxter street from consumption, brought on by the neglect and unkindness of her husband. Since her death the husband had gone on from bad to worse, only saved from killing himself by his excesses by being sent to Blackwell's Island at various intervals for at least eight months in each year. During one of his sprees he had signed a paper which committed his little daughter to the care of the mission. And so Mary had grown up to be an exemplary young woman and the pride of her benefactors.

Jack's curiosity was awakened to find out what kind of a man Mary's father was, and so he started out one night to search for him. He spent three nights after working hours in the search, and found him at last in a miserably squalid room on the top floor of a tenement house in Pearl street. He was far gone on the road to the grave. The neighbors did what they could for him, which was not much, for they were very poor. So Jack sat up with him late into the night. A feeble kerosene lamp burned on the mantel and the corners of the room were filled with shadows. Mr. Rogers fell into an uneasy slumber toward midnight and muttered in his dreams about the good things he had to eat when his wife was alive. In his incoherent remarks he mentioned roast beef and gravy. Then he awoke.

"I was dr'amin' iv th' foine feedin' I had afore Mollie died. Aye, b'y, but she could cook th' grub. An' th' pancakes she could bake was like honey in yer mouth. I wisht I had some of them cakes now, so I do. I think they'd be puttin' life intil me."

Next morning when Jack went to get his breakfast, as usual, he asked the proprietor to permit him to have an interview with Mary. She came, fluttering and paling, into the back part of the restaurant.

"Miss Rogers," said Jack, all of a tremble, because his love was so near, "I saw your father last night."

"My father," gasped Mary in alarm. "Where was he?"

"In a back room on the top floor of a tenement in Pearl street."

"Was he well?" whispered Mary, not daring to look Jack in the face, but dropping her eyes upon her snowy apron and absent mindedly smoothing out a wrinkle.

"No, he was ill. He spoke about the pancakes your mother used to make, and said that if he could have some equally as good he thought he might feel better, and perhaps recover his health. If you are willing to make them for him I will see that he gets them."

"How good of you," replied Mary, looking at him with a glance of admiration. "But how can we keep them warm?"

"I hadn't thought of that, but, come to think, I can borrow a little oil stove, you furnish the batter and the frying pan, and to-night we will go down and take him some. But perhaps you are afraid to go with me, as I am a stranger to you?"

Mary looked shyly at him and hesitated for a moment. Then she said:

"But I have seen you in the restaurant, haven't I? And I think you can be trusted. You don't look like a very bad man. You bring the oil stove around to-night at 6 o'clock when the restaurant closes, and I will have the batter and the griddle ready.

All day long Mary sang at her work and smiled to herself in anticipation of the meeting. Sometimes, however, she became grave when she thought of her father. But her recollection of him was very indistinct and associated only with oaths and blows. At 6 o'clock the restaurant was closed and Mary stepped out upon the walk with a tin pail in her hand containing batter, a small griddle wrapped in paper under her arm, and a nice piece of salt pork to grease the griddle in her pocket.

Jack was already there with a small oil stove. He was walking up and down the sidewalk impatiently. They went across to Center street and from thence to Pearl. They said very little, and were content to know that each was near to the other. On reaching the tenement they felt rather than saw their way up the dark stairway. Mary was frightened at the dismal look of her father's room, but Jack cheered her. Mr. Rogers was awakened by the opening of the door. Jack turned his back on the meeting between Mary and her father, but he heard feeble and broken acknowledgements of past weakness and promises for the future. When he turned and came to the bedside he saw two wet faces, one softened and repentant, the other hopeful and shining.

"Do you think you could eat some pancakes, father?" said Mary.

"Oh, dear, I could av I had some iv yer mother's makin', Mary. I'm feelin' better already since ye kem," and he raised himself on his pillow to show his strength.

"But, father, I can make you some, and I'll warrant mother never made better," said Mary, looking archly at Jack.

And so the pancakes were made. Jack lit the wick in the stove and greased the griddle, while Mary poured out the batter, and the savory smoke arose like incense in the dismal room and made Mr. Rogers sniff cheerily.

He sat up in bed, bolstered by pillows, and ate two of the cakes. All the time his eyes followed the trim form of his daughter as she tidied up the room. The lovers remained with him until late into the night. Then Jack took Mary to her boarding house, and the wicked young man actually kissed her at the door. She ran up stairs and looked in the glass to see if his lips had left a mark on her cheek. The next morning she ran down to see her father and make him comfortable for the day.

Under the watchful care of Jack and Mary the old man slowly became stronger, and in a few weeks was about again. He did not return to his old habits, and forsook the tenement for two rooms in a more pretentious locality, where Mary went with him to keep house. The other day there was a quiet wedding, at which Mary and Jack were the principals and a few choice friends the spectators. The chief dish at the wedding feast was a big plate of pancakes baked by the bride.

Now the many persons who pass the restaurant daily look in the window, but they look in vain for the fair cook. She is baking pancakes for only two of the hungry persons in this big town.—New York Evening Sun.

Concerning Temperature.

There is a popular notion, chiefly among unobservant people, that our winters are becoming colder and our summers hotter. As a matter of fact, the average winter temperature has not gone below its mean —say 50 degs.—but eight times in forty-four years. The same general statement may be made in regard to summer temperature during the same time, the average mean of each year varying through a very narrow range during the long period above mentioned. It is the habit of mankind to regard everything as phenomenal that appeals strongly to the senses. "The coldest weather within the memory of the oldest inhabitant" is a saying older than the oldest inhabitant. If it were a truthful saying, the gradual cooling of the terrestial globe, which some alarmists believe will freeze out humanity, in the course of ages, is going on at a great rate.—Newark Advertiser.

De lazies' man kin make de bigges' fire.

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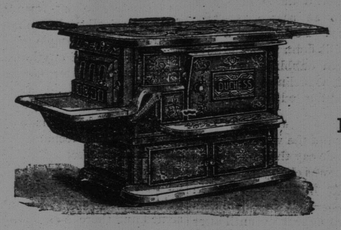

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