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POETRY.

THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN.

BY JOHN G. SAGE.

It has been ascertained by inspection of the registers of many countries, that the uniform proportion of male to female births is as 21 to 20; accordingly in respect to marriage every 21st man is naturally superfluous.

"I long have been puzzled to guess,
And so I have frequently said,
What the reason could really be,
That I never have happened to wed;
But now it is perfectly clear,
I am under a natural ban,
The girls are already assigned—
And I'm a superfluous man!"

Those clever statistical chaps
Declare the numerical run
Of women and men, in the world,
Is Twenty to Twenty-and-one;
And hence in the pairing you see,
Since wooing and wedding began,
For every connubial score,
They've got a superfluous man!

By twenties and twenties they go,
And giddily rush to their fate,
For none of the number, of course,
Can fall of a conjugal mate;
But while they are yielding in scores
To Nature's inflexible plan,
There's never a woman for me—
For I'm a superfluous man!

It isn't that I am a churl,
To solitude over-inclined;
It isn't that I am in fault,
In manners or morals or mind;
Then what is the reason, you ask,
I am still with the bachelor-clan?
I merely was numbered amiss,
And I'm a superfluous man!

Isn't that I am in want
Of personal beauty or grace,
For many a man with a wife
Is uglier far in the face.
Indeed, among elegant men
I fancy myself in the van.
But what is the value of that,
When I'm a superfluous man!

Although I am fond of the girls,
For aught I could ever discern
The tender emotion I feel
Is one that they never return;
This tide to quarrel with fate,
For, struggle as hard as I can,
They're mated already, you know—
And I'm a superfluous man!

No wonder I grumble at times,
With women so pretty and plenty,
To know that I never was born
To figure as one of the twenty;
But yet, when the average lot,
With critical vision I scan,
I think it may be for the best
That I'm a superfluous man!

Truth Stranger than Fiction.

In the autumn of 1817, while the woods were bright with the variegated hues which follow the light touches of early frost, a mounted traveller was quietly pursuing his way through a dark, broad, lonely forest in the western part of the State of New York. He had ridden three miles since seeing a human habitation, and he had yet two to go before he could get sight of another. He was descending a hill into a gloomy-looking valley, through which flowed a shallow but swift-running stream; and on reaching the water, he permitted his thirsty beast to stop and drink.

At that moment a man came out from a cluster of bushes into the road, or horse path, on the other side of the stream. This man was dressed like a hunter, and carried a rifle on his shoulder. In his general appearance there was nothing that indicated hostility or wicked design. He was of medium size, compactly built, with intellectual features, and a certain air of gentility—seeming rather as one abroad from some settlement for a day's sport than a professional hunter. All this the mounted traveller carefully noted before he crossed the stream to continue his journey, and when they came near together a pleasant salutation was exchanged.

"Fine weather for travelling, sir," remarked the man with a gun.

"And for hunting also, I should suppose," smiled the other on the horse.

"Yes, there is game enough," returned the other; "but I am not a good hunter, and can only show one bear for my days work thus far, and that is almost useless to me, because I have no means to take it away. I would willingly give a dollar for the use of a horse like yours for a couple of hours. If you could spare five minutes or so, I would

like you to see the bear. It is just back behind these bushes, some two hundred yards from here."

"I will not only look at it," replied the traveller, dismounting and fastening his horse, "but it is not too heavy, I will take it along for you, seeing I am going your way."

The hunter thanked him in a most cordial manner, and then, as if to make himself agreeable and keeping up the conversation, inquired where the other was from, whither journeying, and so forth; and learned in reply, that the latter resided in Albany, was a merchant in good business, and was travelling, partly for his health, and partly with the view of making an extensive land purchase for future speculation.

"Well, here we are!" exclaimed the hunter as the two emerged from the dense thicket, through which they had slowly forced their way, into the more open wood; "here we are! and now I will show you as neat and fat a beast as you ever saw. Observe where I point my rifle!"

He stepped back some eight or ten feet, deliberately raised the piece to his eye, and pointed the muzzle directly at the head of the traveller. There was a flash, a loud report, and the victim fell like a log, his face covered with blood.

This might, or it might not, have been the first crime committed by the man with the rifle. But as the traveller fell the rifle slipped from his hands, and he shook violently from head to foot; yet he ran to his victim, and hurriedly robbed him of a purse, a pocket-book, a gold watch and chain, some curls of hair, a diamond ring, which he fairly tore from his finger. Then he dragged the body into the thicket, picked up his rifle, plunged madly through the bushes to the road, mounted the traveller's horse, and dashed away from the awful scene.

We must now suppose a lapse of twenty years. In the spring of 1837, there lived in the city of New York a banker and millionaire, whom we shall call Stephen Edwards. He owned a palatial mansion, splendidly furnished, in the very heart of the town; he and his wife were among the leaders of the fashionable world. They had a beautiful daughter, just turned of sixteen, who was about to be married to a foreign nobleman, and great preparations were making for the happy event.

One day, about this period, as the great banker stood conversing with a gentleman from another city, who had called to see him on business, he observed the latter suddenly turn very pale and begin to tremble.

"My dear sir," he said, in the usual tone of off-hand sympathy, "what is the matter? are you ill?"

"A little faint sir, but nothing to cause alarm," replied the other hurriedly. "I am subject to similar spells. If you will be kind enough to excuse me for ten minutes or so, I will take a short walk and return in better condition."

In ten minutes he did return, said he was quite well, calmly proceeded to finish his business with the banker, and then respectfully took his leave.

It was, perhaps, a week after this that, one night, the great banker was sitting before the fire in his library, when a servant came in and presented him a letter. He took it with a frown, opened it in the most indolent and indifferent manner possible, but had not read a dozen words before he came up with a start, turned deadly pale, and trembled so that the paper rattled. He finished the note—for it was rather a note than a letter—worked one hand nervously to his throat, and with the other clasped his forehead and temples. For a minute or two he seemed to be choking into calmsness, by an iron will, some terrible emotion, and he so far succeeded as to address the waiting servant in an ordinary tone.

"James," he said, "who gave you this letter?"

"A man, sir, as said he'd wait for an answer."

"Then I suppose he is waiting?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; show him in."

Soon there was a light tap on the door, and the banker said, "Come in," in an ordinary tone.

The servant opened the door, ushered in the stranger, an immediately withdrew.

The latter was a man verging on sixty, of rough appearance and coarse attire. He wore an old gray overcoat, buttoned to the throat, and a pair of green goggles, and his whole dress was saturated with rain.

"Take a seat," said the banker, pointing to a chair near the fire.

"No, thank you, I'll stand," was the gruff reply. "You got my letter, and, of course, know my business?" he added.

"You allude to this, I suppose?" returned the banker, producing the letter which had caused him so much perturbation.

"Yes."

"I do not understand it! you must have made a mistake!"

"No, no mistake at all. I was present, twenty years ago come the tenth day of next October, and saw you, Stephen Edwards, shoot the man, and if you go to deny it, I'll have you in prison before morning. I've laid my plans and got everything sure; and if you go to playing innocent and refusing my terms, I'll take care to see that you die stretching hemp."

The banker, in spite of himself, turned pale, shuddered, and staggered to a seat.

"What do you want?" he groaned.

"A hundred thousand dollars—not a cent less!"

"I cannot give it—it would ruin me!"

"Just as you say," rejoined the other, moving toward the door; "you know what will follow if I go this way."

"Oh, stay! you must not go yet!" cried the man of crime, in terrible alarm.

He argued, urged, pleaded, implored for mercy at a less fearful cost. In vain. At last, the banker, seeing ruin, disgrace and death before him, if he refused—agreed to the terms. He also agreed to meet the stranger, with the required sum, on the following night, in front of St. Paul's Church.

Both were punctual to the fixed time, and bills and checks, to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars, changed hands.

A month later there was a tremendous run on the bank of which Stephen Edwards was the principal owner. It was soon broken and closed. Then the sheriff was sent to work by eager creditors, and all the real estate and personal property of the late millionaire was seized and sold, leaving him a beggar and the just claims unsatisfied. Fashionable friends deserted the family, and the proud nobleman refused the hand of a ruined banker's daughter.

In the very midst of this disgrace and tribulation, Stephen Edwards encountered the man who had turned so pale and become so agitated in his presence a short time before.

"I rather think you do not know me, sir," said the gentleman, with a formal bow.

"Your face seems somewhat familiar, but I cannot place you," returned Edwards.

"Permit me to bring myself to your recollection then, as I wish you to know me. A little more than six weeks ago, I was talking with you on business, and you observed that I turned deadly-pale, and became agitated."

"Ah yes, I remember you now."

"Let me tell you why I was thus affected. My eye had just chanced upon a curious watch-case, which had once belonged to a merchant named Philip Sydney, who was shot in the western part of this State, some twenty years ago; and on looking at your features closely, I knew you to be the villain who perpetrated the foul deed!"

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the old banker, with a blanched face and quaking form.

"Yes, I knew you," pursued the other, "and a week after, I disguised myself, and had an interview with you in your own mansion. You remember that of course?"

"Not but your own price to keep my fatal secret?"

"Yes, and with that very money, and what other I could command, I was enabled to buy up enough of your own bills to make that run upon your bank which broke it and forced ruin upon you."

"And what would you now that I am ruined?" inquired the other, with the deadly calmness of desperation.

"Now that I have had my revenge, I want you to know that I myself am the man you attempted to murder and did rob! I am Philip Sydney!" Behold the scar where the ball struck and glanced! and he lifted his hat and showed it.

"God be praised!" ejaculated the other; "God be praised that you are still living!"

And unable to restrain his emotion, he burst into tears. "Oh, sir," he continued, "you have taken a load from my conscience—a weight from my soul! Though poverty, beggary, disgrace and death are staring me in the face, I am happy in the knowledge that I am not guilty of murder—more happy than I have been for twenty years, with all the luxurious surroundings of wealth! It was my first and last crime, and I have never been able to tell how I was tempted to so outrage my nature as on that fearful occasion. Now, sir, do with me what you will—only, I pray you, be merciful to my innocent family!"

"I forgive you!" returned the other, extending his hand. "I forgive you! You have been fearfully punished already; and as God has seen proper to preserve us both and bring us together, let us hope it is for our present and future salvation, and endeavor so to live as to deserve the blessings we receive! I will restore you enough to place you and your family above want; and for the rest, I trust we shall both remember we shall soon have to render an account of

our stewardship in another world!"

Philip Sydney kept his word; and with a fresh start in the world, and now an easy conscience, the still enterprising Stephen Edwards accumulated another fortune, much of which he spent in charity.

Philip Sydney died in 1847, and Stephen Edwards in 1851.

From a private source we have all the facts we have recorded.

Is not truth indeed stranger than fiction?

MR. AND MRS. COWPEN.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen belong to that class of the community who are eminently homespun in their characteristics, and who trouble themselves very little about anything that may transpire without the limits of the potato-patch and barn-yard attached to the farm. True, they took a newspaper, but believed three-fourths of it to be made up of romance and lies; and when Mr. Cowpen read to Mrs. C. that the cars performed the distance between Portland and Boston at the rate of twenty miles an hour, he followed up the paragraph with a prolonged whistle, as much as to say, "that's gammon."

Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen lived in Dodgeville, and had reared up a pretty good-sized family in their day, the youngest son being now married and settled with them, carrying on the farm on what is technically called "shares."

Actuated by a laudable desire—though it had come over them at a somewhat advanced period of life—to see something of the world, Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen resolved to visit Boston and see what they could see. Coming down to Bangor by their own wagon, they took the steamboat for Boston, and landed at Eastern wharf the following morning, not, however, without Mrs. Cowpen's nervous system having experienced some severe shocks.

She declared most positively to Mr. C., that she had expected, every minute of the voyage, to be "blown up like a bladder;" and she set it down as little less than a miracle that they hadn't "sunk to the bottom, time and time again;" and moreover, that she shouldn't get the smell of lamp oil out of her clothes if she should live to all eternity."

But these things were mere trifles compared to what both Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen were destined to encounter.

Attended by the assiduity of the hackmen to help them with their baggage, Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen, after a long and almost frantic struggle to retain possession of the bandbox and bandanna handkerchief which contained all their luggage, at last found their way to the American House, Hazover Street. It was just about dinner time, and Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen were shown to their room, knowing about as much what to do with themselves as fish out of water. They scarcely had time to look at the carpet and the ceiling, and back from the ceiling to the carpet half a dozen times, when Mrs. Cowpen discovered the bell-pull, with its ornamental tassel and green cord hanging most invitingly to the hand. Her curiosity was excited, and she seized it with a pull.

"Creation!" exclaimed Mrs. C., for at that moment the first stroke of the gong for the dinner hour was sounded just at their door. "What have you pulled over?" exclaimed the astonished farmer, while his wife, with her hands on both ears, keeled backwards on the floor, as little boys do on the muster field when the cannon is fired, in mimic show of being shot. But the gong sounded louder and louder, while the farmer vainly tried to stop it by loosening up the cord of the bell-pull, supposing his wife had set something agoing that wouldn't stop till the cord got right again. Poor Mrs. Cowpen, she took all over like a pyramid of calf's foot jelly. She told her son's wife, after she got back to Dodgeville, "what the fright cack away all her appetite," and she was "amazin' fond of sparagus and green peas so airy in the season," she "could not touch one of 'em."

After one day's sojourn in Boston, during which their inexperience cost them not a little annoyance and expense, they concluded that it was best to get home as quick as possible. But how should this be done? Mrs. Cowpen declared she wouldn't go in no steamboat—that was "flat;" and so Mr. C. discovered that he could go as far as Portland by railroad, and from thence take the stage to Bangor, &c.

"How much?" asked Mr. C. of the ticket-master at the depot.

"To be sure."

"Dollar ninety cents."

"Dollar and ninety cents. Gracious! how expensive. Well, then, this'll carry us both down to Portland, will it?"

"Both? no; it's a single ticket. If there are two of you, you will require another ticket."

"Well, what'll you take for tew?"

"Three dollars eighty."

"Creation! don't you sell them cheaper where there's a tew?"

Being assured that this was not the case, Mr. Cowpen reluctantly paid the fare and got into the cars with his worthy spouse. No sooner had the train got outside the depot, than Mrs. C. discovered that she was on the sunny side, and after pressing a long whistle, got the window open, and her parasol stuck out and arranged so as to screen her face. The cars were going at the top of their speed and the parasol coming in contact with the stone work of an arched bridge, flew out of Mrs. Cowpen's hands into pieces before they had got a mile on their journey.

"Stop! stop! stop the railroad. I've lost my parasol!" screamed Mrs. C.

"Can't help it, marm," said the conductor; "I couldn't stop if you had lost a dozen of them."

This being properly explained to her, and also the fact that by this time the parasol, broken as it must be, was a couple of miles behind them, she fell into a brown study and said nothing, except that now and then she would start almost out of her clothes every time the steam whistle was sounded by the engine, and declare that "the biller was bustin'."

Perhaps this little trip of Mr. and Mrs. Cowpen's was not without its good effects. After all, for it seemed, in a most remarkable degree to reconcile them both to their home, from which Mrs. Cowpen declared that she would never stir again, "let what would happen. She told the story of the bell-pull until she got so laughed at that she thought it best for the future to leave that chapter out in rehearsing her travelling experience.

Flight of the Eagle.

Great as are the distances which these birds sometimes fly, it becomes comprehensible when we know that an eagle, as he sweeps through the air traverses a space of sixty feet in a second of time. To be able thus rapidly to move along is undoubtedly an attribute of power; but there is something far more imposing, far more majestic in that calm, onward motion when, with wings outspread and quite still, the mighty bird floats buoyantly in the atmosphere, upheld and borne along by the mere act of volition. The length of time he can thus remain suspended without a single beat of his broad, silken pinions, is to me still an inexplicable fact. He will sail forward in a horizontal direction, for a distance of more than a mile, without the slightest quiver of a feather, showing that the wings are moved. Not so extraordinary is the power the bird possesses of arresting himself instantaneously at certain spots, in dropping through the air with folded wings from a height of three or four thousand feet. When circling so high that he shows as a dot, he will suddenly close both wings, and falling like an arrow, pass through the intervening space in a very few seconds of time. With a burst his broad pinions are again unfolded, and he sweeps away horizontally, smoothly, and without effort. He has been seen to do this when carrying a sheep of twenty pounds weight in his talons; and from so giddy a height that both the eagle and his booty were not larger than a sparrow. It was directly over a wall of rock in which the eyrie was built; and while the speck in the clouds was being examined and doubts entertained as to the possibility of its being the eagle, down he came, headlong, very instant increasing in size, when, in passing the precipice, out flew his mighty wings; the sheep was flung into the nest, and on the magnificent creature moved, calmly and unfurled as a bark sails gently down the stream of a river.

A Contented Druggist.

A druggist was aroused by the ringing of his night-bell, went down stairs, and had to serve a customer with a dose of salts. On his return his wife grumbled out, "What profit do you get out of the penny?"

"A ha'penny," said the druggist.

"And for that ha'penny you will keep both me and yourself awake for a long time!" rejoined the wife.

"Never mind," added the placid druggist, "the dose of salts will keep him awake much longer. Let us thank Heaven that we have the profit and not the pain of the transaction."

An Irishman says:—"It's a great pleasure to be alone, especially when you have your sweetheart with you."

—In the march of life, don't head the order of "right about," when you are about right.

—Cold water ought never to be drunk within half an hour of eating. It dilutes the gastric juice and reduces its temperature and thus retards digestion and injures the health.