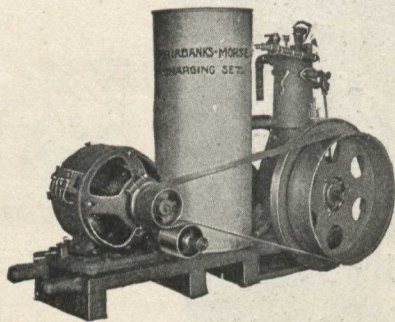


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The Rich Man and the Messengers

BY CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

ONCE there was a man so rich that if his fortune had been converted into hundred-thousand dollar bills and straightway poured on him he would have been as dead as Desdemona.

Now this great man had a favourite saying which he repeated at morning, noon and night. "To die rich is to die disgraced. To die rich is to die disgraced."

This he said so many times that he believed it, and so did many poor men who were unselfish enough to wish to relieve him of his disgrace.

But he was always out when they called. He was fond of out-door exercise.

One day he saw two strange messengers walking toward him bearing news. His heart told him that they both bore news to him.

As the first one came near, he said, "Are you the man who says that to die rich is to die disgraced?"

"I am and I repeat it. To die rich is to die disgraced."

"Die honoured by all, then," said the first messenger. "You have lost all save a mere pittance of a thousand a year. Die honoured by all."

The great man pulled a wry face as if he had heard bad news. And then he saw the second messenger, and he smiled and said, "Ah, I suppose you are Death. Come along that I may be put out of my misery at once!"

But the second messenger said, "Nay, I am not Death. I have good news for thee. I bear thee ten years of life that have been added to thee. Take them."

Then the great man smote his chest and said to the first messenger:

"Look here, I've been accustomed to district messengers all my life, but I never saw one as prompt as you. Couldn't you have dawdled to play marbles a little? Here I have ten years on my hands and no money to spend. You're too literal, anyhow. I was indulging in rhetoric to a certain extent. Can't you manage to tell me it's all a mistake? I don't mind disgrace such an everlasting lot."

But the messenger had departed.
—Ridgway's.

* *

Peary Optimistic

IN his concluding article in "Harper's Magazine," Commander Peary shows that he is still optimistic about the American route to the North Pole. That four and a half months' trip from Cape Sheridan to Sydney Harbour—pounded about by waves and storm and ice-field—has not dismayed him. To get within 174 nautical miles of the Pole and then be forced back, has not discouraged him. He believes that the next expedition which follows his route will reach the Grand Prize. He says: "Had the winter of 1905-6 been a normal season in the Arctic regions and not, as it was, a particularly open one throughout the northern hemisphere, there is not a member of the expedition who doubts that we could have attained the pole. And had I known before leaving the land what actual conditions were to the northward, as I know now, I could have so modified my route and my disposition of sledges that we could

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