

HIGHWAY ROBBERY.

Robbed on the highway boldly,
Robbed in a ruthless way;
Robbed without cry or parley,
Robbed in the open day!

This I remember only:

A strange and subtle spell;
A glance like summer lightning,
And voice like silver bell.

I gave not cry nor struggle,
Called not for aid aloud;
Sought not the laws protection,
Nor pity from the crowd;

But gave, quite unresisting,
The treasure I have lost;
Nay more, forgave the robber
Whose path my own had crossed.

"Six feet," strong and stalwart,
Captured by "five feet one";
Bound by a tether finer
Than ever spider spun!

My captor wore a bonnet
Misty and blue and small;
Outside it, rose or feather
I cannot tell at all.

But pearls, and stars, and roses,
And curling rings of gold,
Were somewhere 'twixt the bonnet
And throat tie's silken fold—

And words with silver echoes
Rang as she passed me by,
And then my heart, unguarded,
She bore off bodily.

'Twas thus the robber met me,
One sunny Saturday—
Robbed me in open daylight,
Upon the broad highway.

The Hamilton Brothers. A LOVE STORY.

"We sat and talked in the firelight, my brother Frank and I, just as we had set and talked a hundred times before in the busy, backward years which we two brothers had spent together.

Suddenly looking up, Frank met my eyes fixed upon his moody face, and running his fingers lazily through his curly hair, he laughed; but his laugh had not its old warm, careless ring.

How well Bent seems to be getting on at Melbourne, Max, said he. His letters to you are filled with his own prosperity.

Of course you do not know of any assistants to send out to Bent, Frank said. The poorest young surgeons of your acquaintance are ourselves the Hamilton Brothers, and thank Heaven, we have not fallen so low as to exile ourselves voluntarily as druggists to Bent. I would not change quarters with him for any consideration, but I fear I envy his success. You must own, that it is hard fighting here.

So it is everywhere, in any profession just at first, I answered quietly. There is but one thing we can do. However small our income, we can live it down, and work hard to increase it. That, I take it, is the secret of success, Frank.

We canvassed our prospects, and then Frank, told me how anxious he was to succeed, that he might win Lettice for his wife. It was Lettice's birthday and we were going to pay our respects to her on this eventful occasion. Frank told me how great a trial it was to him, waiting and struggling for success that he might marry, and I asked:

Frank, do you feel that the waiting is a trial, too, for—her?

I know what you mean, he answered, slightly pausing. Yes, Max, I think so. Do you know it? I questioned in a low voice, whose sadness touched my heart. And he answered, with no pause at all:

Yes, Max, I know it. We had just finished dressing, when I startled Frank by saying very quietly: I have made up my mind to go to Bent.

To—what? Simply what I said—to go out to Bent. I want a change, and a change holding out some prospect of success. Why should I not seize this opportunity?

But—you take me so fearfully by surprise, stammered Frank. Why are you a cleverer surgeon than Bent; you go and be his servant.

We stood under the bare old lime-tree, which in summer shaded the doorway, and my hand was on the bell when Frank stayed it and spoke a few words in unusual earnestness.

Tell me one thing, Max, before we go in. You do not decide to leave here for my sake—because I have so often complained that our practice is not sufficient for two; and because you know I want to marry, and cannot do so as we are? You would not leave your home and your friends, and me and go out to drudgery for that reason, Max, I shall not be comfortable unless you tell me that you do it for your own sake.

Knowing that my going would spare me one great pain which in my cowardice I shrank from, I answered him with a quick yes.

We had a very pleasant evening with Lettice. I did not feel very happy, and my dejected appearance was referred to

more than once in the evening. Frank made some remark when I in reply said:

The fact is, Lettice, Frank cannot understand my last new whim, which is to go out to Melbourne to join an old friend of ours.

And this was how I told her; on her birthday night. I, who had worked, and hoped, and waited, for the fulfillment of one bright dream which now lay shattered into fragments in that pretty cheerful room.

What do you think, Lettice, of this new project of Max's? asked Frank, laughing, as she moved by the tea-table. She simply said, I do not like it; but if Max thinks it best, I suppose he does well to carry out his project.

Max, said Lettice's father as he came in, looking curiously at me, what's this the little one tells me? You are surely not thinking in any seriousness of going abroad.

I have decided to do so, indeed, as soon as Frank and I can arrange matters here?

I cannot believe it. Why, if my own daughter had suddenly told me she was going I could not have been more astonished. What can have decided you?

I have learned by experience, I said trying to force a laugh, that Redbury is unfortunately too healthy a place to support so many doctors.

Frank and I walked home that night very silently. I think we had never before passed along the narrow, quaint old streets after an evening spent with Lettice, without talking of her, and of the home she made so bright and happy. But when we entered our own silent room we both hesitated, as if unwilling to separate so.

Max, began Frank, at last, stooping down to push a spill into the smouldering fire, this house seems dreary enough to return to even with you. What will it seem, I wonder, when you are gone?

It depends upon who shall live here then, my dear fellow, I answered. No house where you and Lettice live could be dreary in any way.

I could see the scarlet rush into his face even before he lighted the gas. Then he turned to me with joyous eyes, and leaning on the chimney piece, asked me laughingly when I would come back and prove that for myself.

I will come, I said, quite cheerfully, in—let me see—in twenty years perhaps.

O nonsense, Max, he cried, in his quick earnestness laying one hand upon my arm; you will come for my wedding.

For your wedding? I echoed, as if the words spoken so simply had bewildered me. Frank does she really love you? Why, Max, old fellow, I never saw you nervous before. Are you afraid that I am deceiving myself—or that she is deceiving me?

No—never afraid of that. You know she loves you, Frank.

Yes, Max, I know it.

Then I will come—unless you marry within ten years' time.

Frank's whistle of astonishment broke into a hearty laugh. A nice little waiting time you allow us, Max. We shall certainly have leisure to think it well over.

If you don't marry until then, I went on, laughing, too, I will come. If you do, you must have your big brother represented, and I will come to you for a holiday in ten years' time.

Ten years! mused Frank; what a weary time to look on to, unless one is anticipating a very happy future.

Day after day, until the last hour came, had I shrunk from bidding farewell to Lettice. Then I just went to her, as I had done many a time before, standing and chatting idly in the pretty room where we had often been so gay together.

If Frank is to drive here for you in time to catch the express you allow us a very short time indeed, said Mr. Oldfield.

And yet it is a long good-bye added Lettice, jestingly; you are not coming home for a long time, are you, Max?

Frank and I have made an important arrangement about that, I answered trying to jest, too, because I fancied she would understand what he had asked me to do. I am going to stay ten years unless he wants me.

If he does not want you, you prefer staying out there?

Yes. What prospect is there of any one else wanting me.

I suppose none, he answered quietly, as you say so; but we shall be glad to see you when you return. Not that you will care for that either, for you care for nothing you know, except fortifying your life.

Her words in their quiet simple scorn stabbed me to the heart.

That is a wide word, Lettice, I said, and a word which even yet I have not fathomed.

But you expect to do so in Melbourne?

I hope so.

With an odd little laugh she changed the subject; and very soon Frank drove

up to the gate. Mr. Oldfield and Amy went out and stood beside the dog-cart, talking to him, while I followed more slowly. Lettice came with me, and stood a minute under the bare old lime tree, with the winter sunshine on her bright young face. And I—looking down upon her—knew that this picture would dwell in my heart through all my lonely life.

Her jesting scorn was all gone now; only her eyes were a little puzzled, and a little sad.

You will be quite happy, Max, she said, with that happiness which makes others happy too.

Tell me how, Lettice, I cried, the strong and passionate love of my heart trembling in my voice. Tell me how to win this happiness.

I cannot, she answered softly. I cannot teach you what you know so well.

Lettice, I said, my own dearest friend, this is the last moment. Give me some few words of help to take with me—as a sister would have given them to me.

Very softly, while her clear, sweet eyes looked bravely into mine, she whispered the little verse, which has been ever with me since, and has helped me often, as her voice could help me in those far-off days.

There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need of prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on God,
Is happy everywhere.

From the gate I looked back wistfully to where she still stood under the winter branches, and she smiled one bright, quick smile and ran in.

Then I sat down beside Frank, and Amy sprang up, and gave me, with tear-filled eyes, the only kiss among all my sad good-byes.

Later on, in the frosty winter morning, we two brothers, who had been together all our lives, parted on the deck of the great waiting vessel, with only a few broken words, and one long, close, lingering hand-grasp.

* * * * *

The ten years are passing, and you must keep your promise, Max, and come.

I read the words over and over again. It was not yet ten, but over seven years since I had set foot in Melbourne, and in every letter Frank had sent me through those long years I had expected him to tell me what he had told me at last. Yet now that it was told, the lines seemed to swim before my eyes, and my fingers would not write the glad and congratulatory words I wished to send him.

Now that my reward is come, he wrote, I claim your promise. We only delay our marriage for your arrival. Max, old fellow, you would have felt happy for me indeed, if you had seen how willingly Mr. Oldfield gave my darling to me. I had been a son to him for years, he said; I could hardly be nearer when I was his daughter's husband. And now my cup of happiness will be full when you come. How soon can you be home?

So, upon a bright Spring morning, Frank and I met once more in England; and tired with a tiredness which I had never felt before, I rested that evening in my own chair beside the cheery home fire; striving to look back joyfully into my brother's beaming face.

You are very tired, Max, said Frank, in his quick glad tones.

A little; but I was not thinking of that. I was thinking how utterly content you look, Frank.

So I ought to, ought I not? because I am so utterly content. Do I look changed in any other way?

No, none.

So I look utterly content, do I? yet I have had trouble too. You ought to say you see the traces, Max.

What trouble has it been? I asked.

A trouble of five years ago, Max, he answered quietly; a trouble I never felt that I could tell you in a letter. When I first asked Lettice to be my wife she—refused me, Max.

I feared so, Frank, I said, so low that he stepped forward to catch the words. I feared so from your silence at that time. But never mind, dear fellow, as it has ended so brightly.

No, I don't mind now one atom. It has ended so brightly as you say.

It seemed like a dream to be walking once more at Frank's side, on the shadowy street; and still more like a dream to be entering unannounced the pretty familiar room, where Lettice sat alone at the window sewing in the twilight.

Lettice, cried Frank, in gay eagerness, here's Max.

I was standing opposite her, looking down upon her with still, calm eyes; the grave elder brother of her affianced husband. She dropped her work, and put her two hands into mine in quick, glad greeting; and I spoke to her just as I knew Frank would wish me to speak to her; watching all the while his face as well as hers. She was changed more than he was. The face that had been almost childlike, in its sunny beauty was a woman's face now; deeper and graver, but infinitely more beautiful, I thought, as I saw its old bright, sunny smile still

there. She looked up at Frank, a wonderful light shining in her eyes.

Now you have all you wish, Frank, she said. And I felt that she was as happy in his love as he was in hers. I stood beside them, talking in laughing, genial tones; hoping that she could never guess how hardly I had schooled myself to this.

Presently Frank passed out through the open window, and Lettice, looking after him, raised her eyes questioningly to me.

You think us all changed, I suppose, Max. Even Frank?

Yes, I answered, absently.

But you have not seen sister Amy yet, she went on, smiling. She of course is most changed of all. Frank is gone to fetch her I fancy. He says she is like what I was at her age, but that is only his pleasing flattery, for she is very, very pretty.

I followed her words dreamily, wondering whether it could really be seven years since Lettice and I stood talking to each other last, while I felt how impossible it was that the little one whom we had all combined to pet and spoil could be at all what Lettice was in those sweet old days.

Frank seemed to know exactly where she would be, Lettice went on, a little nervously, I fancied in my silence. You remember the low, old seat under the lilacs, Max? Amy is as fond of sitting there as—I used to be when I was her age. You used to say, too, that you loved to rest there on a summer evening; but you have been away so long, doing so much, that those old memories, will be all buried now?

Yes. They are all buried, I answered, feeling the scarlet mount into my face to contradict the coolness of my words.

She smiled a little wistful smile, which had a strange, brave tenderness in it.

I too have lived seven years since then, she said, but the old memories are dear to me, Max, and I would not bury them for all the world.

Because it is so different with you and me, I faltered. I—I think I have no courage left. How long, Frank stays.

I see them in the lower garden now, she answered gently, looking away from me as I struggled with my pain.

How quickly Amy would have run in to greet me in the old times, I said, speaking once more as I had schooled myself to do; only that a little bitterness would creep into the tone.

Yes, laughed Lettice, softly, but she will not come this evening without Frank. She has been quite timid about your return. She asked me to-day if you would think Frank had chosen unwisely because she is so much younger than he is; so ignorant and untried, she said.

In the bewildered breathless silence which followed Lettice's words, she looked up at me; deep shadows gathering in her eyes, as if she too felt the agony of the doubt and hope which had stirred me.

Do you think Frank has chosen wisely, Max, in taking my little sister? she asked, speaking plainly the truth, which she knew now that I had never heard.

Lettice—Lettice, is it so? I stammered, my fingers tight upon the chair below me, and my heart beating wildly.

Yes, Max, she answered, it is so. And I knew she could read the whole story of my deep and lasting love written in my quivering face.

And you, Lettice?

I, she answered, in a bright, low tone—I have waited.

Then I covered my face hurriedly; for boyish tears had overflowed my eyes in the untold joy of this surprise.

Max, she whispered, her gentle touch upon my arm, I thought you knew this, and had come home for their sakes.

No, not for their sakes, Lettice; for Frank's and yours.

Why for my sake? she asked, tears shining in her own eyes as she looked brightly into mine.

Then, low and brokenly, I told her of my love; the long hopeless love which would not die. And at last she answered, with her gentle hands on mine, and a deep, true gladness shining behind the tears:

Max, dear Max, I am very glad I waited.

* * * * *

Max, said Frank, that night after we got home, may I have the old plate put back upon the door?

We both laughed at the idea, for Frank was Dr. Hamilton now, and I had half a dozen letters after my name; but we took a candle and went off at once to find it. Frank—sitting down and taking it upon his knee—brushed the thick dust from it quite tenderly; while I, leaning over his shoulder, read the letters as he cleaned.

"Hamilton Brothers!" It does not do, Frank; and yet thank God for the truth it tells. We are brothers still; we will be brothers to the end.

Which runs fastest, heat or cold? Heat, of course, because anybody can catch cold.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A CLERGYMAN in Scotland desired his hearers never to call one another liars, but when any one said the thing that was not, they ought to whistle. One Sunday he preached a sermon on the leaves and fishes, and being at a loss how to explain it, he said the leaves were not like the leaves of now-a-days—they were as big as some of the bills of Scotland. He had scarcely pronounced these words, when he heard a loud whistle.

What's that ca's me a liar?
It is I, Willy Macdonald the baker.
Well, Willy, what objection have ye to what I ha' told you?

None, Mess John; only I want to know what sort of ovens they had to bake those leaves in.

MARK TWAIN has been troubled with a lightning-rod man, and to get rid of him addressed him as follows:

Let us have peace! I shrieked. Put up a hundred and fifty! Put some on the kitchen! Put a dozen on the barn! put a couple on the cow; scatter them all over the persecuted place till it looks like a zinc-plated, spiral-twisted, silver-mounted, cane-brake! Move! Use up all the material you can get your hands on, and when you run out of lightning-rods put up ram-rods, cam-rods, stair-rods, piston-rods—anything that will pander to your dismal appetite for artificial scenery, and bring respite to my raging brain, and healing to my lacerated soul!

A CONNECTICUT paper has the cruelty to say, "A married lady recently fell into the river, and would have been drowned, except that her cries attracted the attention of her husband, who mistaking her in the dark for another woman, worked like a beaver to get her out."

PLEASE illustrate difference between a blunder and a mistake. Certainly: when a man on leaving a social party takes a poor hat instead of his good one he makes a blunder; but when he takes a good hat instead of his own poor one he makes a mistake.

A TEXAS editor, in discussing the right of a member of congress from that State to his seat says, The seat is his by one of the highest titles known to the law of civilized lands—the right of purchase, "for he bought his seat and paid for it!"

A YOUNG lady, in the kitchen, making a pie, said to her cousin, who was hanging around, Frank, the kitchen is no place for boys. Has dough such an attraction for you? It isn't the dough (dough), cousin, but it is a dear that attracts me.

"A WOMEN'S greatest enemy is the looking-glass," said a husband to his wife, who was admiring herself in a mirror while he was sipping his wine. "That may be," she retorted, "but it does not cause her and her children half so much woe as her husband's wine glass does."

A REMOTE Indiana editor makes a pathetic appeal to his readers, saying, if there is anything you know, that is worth knowing, that we ought to know, and you know we don't know, please let us know of it.

It is rumored that young ladies who object to the word "obey" in the marriage ceremony, now hoodwink the guileless youths who lead them to the altar by glibly promising to "love, honor and be gay."

It is said that when a young man of Dubuque, where the small pox has had a run of seven weeks, asks a young lady to take his arm, she gazes on him with a "vaccinating smile."

A WESTERN editor, in acknowledging the gift of a peck of onions from a subscriber, says, "It is such kindnesses as these that bring tears to our eyes."

WHEN is a tea-pot like a cat? When your tea's in it (when you're teasin' it).

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