

# THE LONDONDERRY ARC-LIGHT

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## THE LONDONDERRY ARC-LIGHT.

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LONDONDERRY ARC-LIGHT,

ACADIA MINES, N. S.

## POETRY OF THE DAY.

### Pegging and Pegging Away.

There was an old shoemaker, sturdy as steel,  
Of great wealth and repute in his day,  
Who'd questioned his secret of lock to reveal,  
Would chirp like a bird on a spray:  
"It isn't so much the vocation you're in,  
Or your living for it," he would say,  
"As it is that forever, through thick and thin,  
You should keep up a pegging away."

I have found it a maxim of value whose truth  
Observation has proved in the main,  
And which well might be written a watch-word by youth  
In the labor of hands and brain,  
For even if genius and talent are cast  
Into work with the strongest of steel,  
You can never be sure of achievement at last,  
Unless you keep pegging away!

There are shopmen who might into states  
Men have grown,  
Politicians for handiwork made,  
Some poets who in shops would have  
And mechanics best suited for trade;  
But when once in the harness however it  
Be,  
Back to duty to your work night and day,  
Secure in the triumph of hand and wit,  
If you only keep pegging away!

There are times in all tasks when the  
Spendthrift existence is vain,  
For the secret of wealth in the present  
And past,  
And of fame and of honor, is plain:  
It lies not in change, nor in sentiment  
Nay,  
Nor in wayward exploit and display,  
But just in the shoemaker's homely  
advice  
To keep pegging and pegging away.

Keep pegging and pegging away.  
Leave diligent endeavors for such as would cast  
Their spendthrift existence in vain,  
For the secret of wealth in the present  
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## SELECTED.

### NELS THURLOW'S TRIALS.

#### CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"Now come back," said the old man, "and go to work, and see if you can be a little mite less clumsy."

"I never will," Nels replied, in a white heat of passion. "I never will do another stroke for you as long as I live. I said I wouldn't if I had been Dick Stark, and now you've treated me worse than you did him." And he sobbed with a sense of the wrong and ignominy that had been heaped upon him.

"Very well, do as you like," cried Podlong. "Dick didn't make much by puttin' out, and I guess you won't. The farm has got along without him, and it can get along without you."

"I'm not a slave, to be abused and knocked about by any man," Nels muttered, wishing himself a little stronger or the rock not quite so big, there would have been such satisfaction in hurling it at the old man's head.

Thus the evil which we yield to in ourselves has the power of raising a kindred demon in others, and the thoughtless blow or word may leave a lasting scar upon an innocent soul.

"I'm at work for wages, or I have been," he went on. "You owe me for over five months. But as you won't pay Dick Stark—"

"I don't pay nobody that breaks his agreement with me," interrupted the old man.

"You won't give me any money?" Nels demanded.

"Nary a cent," exclaimed Podlong grimly. "You'd better," said Nels, with a lurid fire in his eyes, as he stood bareheaded by the wall, with his disordered hair over his pale brows. "I won't stand it, and go off without my pay as Dick did. I give you warning."

"Warning of what?" said the old man, advancing, as if to renew the flogging. "Be careful what you say."

"I know what I'm saying," returned the boy, "and I mean it." Desperation burned in his eyes and tearstained cheeks. There was nothing which he would not have done at that moment to avenge his wrongs, as the old man might have seen had he not been blinded by his own passion.

Nels did not even return to pick up his tattered straw hat, which had been swept away by the old man's switch, but hurried along beside the wall, crossed the barnyard, and entered the house, where, reaching his garret, he began, amid sobs of rage and grief, to pack his clothes into a bundle.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Nels had left his hat in the orchard where it had fallen in his struggle with old Podlong, but he had another hat in his room. That was soon on his head, and with his small bundle of clothes under his arm he hurried down stairs and through the front entry, his heart too full of passion for even a word of farewell to old Aunt Podlong.

She waylaid him, however, and asked under her amazed speculaculous what it all meant.

"It means," said Nels, with explosive grief, "that the old man, he no longer called him uncle, 'has whaled me—a convulsive sob—and I'm going.'"

"Oh, Nels, I'm so sorry," said the old lady soothingly. "You know he does give way to his temper unaccountably sometimes. I wouldn't mind it."

"Not mind it?" echoed the boy, all a fire with indignation. "You don't know what it is to be licked with the limb of an apple tree—when I wasn't to blame either! I wouldn't stay and do another hour's work for him if it was to keep me from starving."

"You'll feel different after you've been away a little while," she said. "You'll come back, I guess. I'll make it all right between him and you."

"Come back? What should I ever come back for? But—Nels faltered—you've been good to me. I haven't anything against you."

His voice choked again, and he hurried away. Whether he went he himself hardly knew. He avoided houses and people. Proud and sensitive, he was ashamed to let anyone see his face, the wretched gloom of which he could not hide, and he could not have trusted himself to speak of his wrongs.

He might do as Dick Stark did, and have the old man arrested for assault. But Podlong didn't mind walking into court and paying a little fine—at least he pretended he didn't—and the boy must think of some more terrible retribution. Even the wages due him, which he despised of getting by any lawful means seemed to him a trifle compared with the awful debt Podlong had incurred by the blows he had struck—a debt the boy vowed should be paid, at whatever cost to himself.

He sat down on the edge of a woodland, and broke spears of grass with his agitated fingers, and plotted vengeance. The sun was setting on a September landscape so fair and tranquil that it seemed a mockery to the turbulence of his heart. A laborer with field a few rods below, sat down on a stone and lighted his pipe. After smoking a few puffs he walked on and disappeared over the hill.

If there is such a thing as an

evil genius, it must have been that which prompted Nels to rise shortly after and saunter down to the rock where the man had sat. He thought he had seen something drop from his lap as he got up, and he was not mistaken. A fragment of a card of matches, white and clean, lay on the grass. He looked eagerly to see if anybody was near to observe him; then stooping quickly he picked up the match, which he carried in his hand with an innocent air as he sauntered back to the woods.

There, hidden in a hollow, he tried one of them, on the sole of his shoe, and found that it burned with a lively sputter. He had three left, these he gloated over with vindictive satisfaction, and finally put them away carefully in his pocket. He had been wishing only a short time before, that he had taken a few matches from Podlong's house, and wondering where he could get some.

How he passed the time until eleven o'clock that night I hardly know. At that gloomy hour a slight dark figure, visible only to the eye of the calm stars, crept stealthily under the shadow of a great strawstack standing within a few rods of Podlong's great barn. It was the figure of a boy. The boy was Nels Thurlow.

Having reached a sheltered spot under the brow of the stack, he concealed himself and listened. All was still in the house; Uncle and Aunt Podlong and their hired girl were no doubt sleeping soundly. All had been quiet, too, in the house of Gideon Shaw, their nearest neighbor, when Nels passed it a few minutes before. Only the rhythmic chorus of the tree cricket broke the silence of the autumn night.

After waiting and listening a while, he pulled out armfuls of straw from the stack until he had a pile breast-high beside him. This he heaped against the corner of the barn. Some got scattered by the way, and he now scattered more over the same ground, until there was a continuous trail of straw between the barn and the stack.

Everything, from the finding of the matches, seemed to favor the boy's scheme of vengeance. He remembered hearing Podlong say, only two days before, that the insurance on his buildings had run out, and that he must get it renewed the first time he went to the village. He had not gone to the village yet, unless he went that afternoon. And the barn was filled with hay to the top of the mows, and with grain to the edge of the great bins—wheat and oats and rye—while the floor was heaped with still unhusked corn. There were, also, adjoining sheds with lofts crammed with fodder, wagons and sleighs in the wagon house, and ploughs and harrows and machines and tools wherever they could be best stowed away.

CHAPTER V.

Under the open sheds and in the yard were sleeping cattle. Nels had no grudge against them; he went softly and let down the bars leading into the lane, so that they could escape at the first alarm. There was a stable near the house, but that he would spare for the sake of the horses it sheltered. The house too should be exempt, because of the old lady's kind words to him, although she had not always been so kind.

When all was ready he sat down again under the stack to fortify his resolution with the recollections of the wrongs he had endured, and to enjoy, in anticipation, the old man's impotent fury at the sight of his blazing property. He did not much care what might happen to himself. He believed he could escape; but even at the risk of being caught and punished, he was determined to have his revenge.

While he was waiting, and hardening his heart as often as it whispered to him that what he was

doing was desperately dangerous and wicked, a noise in the direction of the orchard drew his attention. Was the old man out there picking his precious pippins at that time of night?

He had certainly heard a bough clash, and a thud on the ground as one of the great apples in its fall. Silence followed for a few minutes, only the crickets kept up their pulsing song, and now and then a full-fled cow in the yard heaved a far-heard sigh of content. Then came an unmistakable noise at the orchard wall.

Nels lay perfectly still, thrilled with a strange fear, and all his senses strained by intense excitement. Presently a man got over the wall, not more than five or six rods away—so far, indeed, that Nels would not have seen him but for the sound that attracted and quickened his sight in the obscurity.

After another pause the man drew over the fence something which by his movements and the slight rubbing sound it made, Nels guessed to be a ladder—probably the same from which he had picked the fatal pippins that afternoon.

He crept out of his hiding place and following at a safe distance, saw the man approach the house, raise the ladder, and place it noiselessly against one of the upper windows. There the robber—for such he undoubtedly was—waited for a long time, as it seemed to Nels, and finally, moving softly, tried the sash. It seemed to offer no difficulties, and soon his head and shoulders, which showed black against the white-painted side of the house, disappeared into the room.

All this Nels served to divert the boy's attention from his own private scheme of vengeance. And now came other reflections. What if the man would be to him? The man should suffer from a robbery at the hands of one whom he had probably never wronged.

Far from being a bad boy at heart, Nels Thurlow had an unusually strong sense of justice. It was that which had been so deeply outraged by Podlong's ill-treatment of him, and driven him wild with the desire of vengeance. But the same feeling which in its lower manifestations may prompt revenge, in its nobler aspect is conscience. And how could Nelson's conscience let him lurk there while old man Podlong was being robbed?

He remembered when he used to sleep in the next room to the one the burglar was entering (that had been Dick Stark's) how eager he would have been then to defend the house against any depredation. The old feeling came back upon him, and he had forgot his own injuries in a sudden impulse to baffle the burglar.

But what should he do? Try to alarm the family, and by the cry give him warning and a chance to escape? Better run back to Gideon Shaw's house, get assistance, and help to capture the rogue. Although he had himself been brought up to the commission of a dreadful deed, Nels had no sympathy with robbers or with rogues of any sort.

Gideon Shaw lived hardly forty rods away, and in less than three minutes Nels was knocking at his door. Podlong had not slept well for an hour or two after going to bed. Stoutly as he was accustomed to bear himself after his fits of passion, he often felt more remorse for them than he was willing anybody should suspect, and he was particularly disturbed by the recollection of his mad abuse to Nels. He had sharply cut short his wife's remonstrance, but he could not quiet his own thoughts so easily.

"I hadn't ought to have flogged him," he said to himself, as he turned on his pillow, trying in vain to sleep. "Why can't I learn to keep a curb on my pesky temper? He's really the best-intentioned boy I ever had on the farm, and I might

have had a little patience 'stead of wallopin' him."

He groaned and turned again, wondering if he was keeping Mrs. Podlong awake.

"Now I've lost him, I s'pose! for 'tain't likely a boy o' his spirit 'll come back. And he's lost a good place; for I'd 'ave done well by him if he'd staid. He's jest the boy I want. What possessed me to be so harsh with him I can't understand!"

The remorseful Podlong tried to comfort himself with the reflection that he would try to find Nelson the next day and bring him back; inwardly vowing, for I suppose the thousandth time in his life, that he would never let his temper get away with him again. In the midst of these thoughts he fell asleep, to be awakened not long after by a violent knock at the door.

"Who's there?" he shouted, starting up in bed. At the same moment he was aware of a man leaping up from the floor and darting out of the room.

"Robbers!—there's robbers in your house!" the knocker stopped knocking to shout.

The old man, calling to his wife not to be frightened, sprang in his night-clothes to a tall bureau, behind which stood an old musket. It wasn't loaded; and even if it had been, it would have proved a dangerous weapon to the man trying to fire it. But the butt-end might be useful to strike with; and thus armed, Podlong rushed out in pursuit of the intruder.

VI.

After getting in at the chamber window, the robber had cautiously made his way down stairs and entered the old folk's sleeping-room, which was on the lower floor. The old man commonly carried a thick roll of bank-bills in his pocket-book; and it was this the fellow was after. He had barely got his hand upon it when the alarm came at the front door, and the farmer sprang out of bed.

At the back door Nels was standing guard with an eye turned up at the window where he had seen the man's legs following his head and shoulders, disappear in the house. Precisely at that moment when the alarm was raised in front he pulled down the ladder, and made a highly strategic use of it at the back-door. He turned it up on its edge against the steps, which he had hardly done, when the house breaker having unbolted the door on the inside, opened it, dashed out, and plunged headlong over the ladder, which tripped his feet in a most unexpected fashion. The old man rushed out after him, full of fight, with his clubbed musket ready to do execution upon a whole band of robbers.

As the man stumbled over the ladder, Nels flung himself on his back to prevent him from rising and screamed for help. The old man saw the two struggling figures and not knowing which head to hit threw away his musket. At the same time Gideon Shaw came hurrying around the house, with an iron rake in his hands and a whip-lash in his pocket.

Between the three the burglar was captured and bound, and by the time the feat was accomplished, Aunt Podlong came to the door with a lighted lamp.

"Is it you, Nelson?" said the old man, in an agitated voice, as the gleam fell upon the boy's face.

Out of breath with his recent struggle, Nels did not speak. But the helpful neighbor had a voice, and used it.

"He saw the robber getting into a window, and came to my house and gave the alarm. He had the hardest part of the tussle, but my whip-lash has come handy."

"Nelson," said the old man, trembling in his night-clothes, "you've done me a turn I'd no right to expect. I believe the rascal has my pocket-book; leastwise he had pulled my trousers off 'n foot-board, where I always hang 'em when I

go to bed. Must be somebody who knows the house. Turn round here, you scamp, and let's look at your face? Dick Stark?"

"Yes, sir; Dick Stark," said the man, boldly confronting him. "You think I came to rob you. No, sir; I came to help myself to the money you owe me, since I could not come to it by any other way. And I might have got off with some of it, at least, if it hadn't been for Nels."

"I never believed you old man, such a thing!"

"I wouldn't if your beating and cheating me hadn't driven me to it," replied Dick.

"That's no excuse," said Podlong. "Look at Nels here. I used him this very day wuss'n ever I did you. But 'stead o' comin' back to rob me, he comes to save me from robbers."

"Uncle," spoke up Nels in a choking voice, "I didn't come back to do you a good turn. And I'll tell you the truth. If I had known it was Dick after his pay I wouldn't have interfered."

"You think he was doing right?"

The old man was a strange looking object, standing in the lamplight, with his white hair and excited features, and a many-colored bed-quilt, which his wife brought him, wrapped about his shivering limbs.

"No, not right," said Nels, "but you know, uncle, how you treated him."

He spoke earnestly, and not without fear of what his words might provoke. But Podlong was not angry. They were in the kitchen by this time; and Aunt Podlong, dreading the effect of the cold air on the old man's naked shanks, closed the door.

"Untie his hands, Gideon," said Podlong, in a shaking voice. "Now give me my pocket book, Dick. If there's money in it, and I guess there is—for I've been savin' some to pay my insurance—you shall have your dues this very night. I hain't done right myself, I know it, and I don't mind sayin' it here in the presence of you all. Count out his money, Gideon—I can't— with something whatever he thinks is right, for the trouble and expense I've put him to."

It was pitiful to see him so humiliated and broken; and when he turned and said, "Now, Nelson, my boy, what can I do for you?" the lad's heart went out to him with a throb of sympathy and pity.

"Nothing, uncle; I am all right," he said, in a suffocated voice, and with tear-blinded eyes.

"Well, then, go to bed. You'd better turn in too, Dick. And, Gideon, you've had to suffer sometimes from my temper, as well as the rest of 'em, but I vow you never shall again."

So Nels returned to the little room which he had not expected ever to see again. In his gratitude as he crept into his bed and felt that he was once more at home, he could not but wonder if he was the same boy who an hour ago had skulked behind the stack in pursuit of a horrible revenge. What satisfaction could there have been in that? How hideous the very thought of it, compared with the bliss of forgiving and being forgiven!

He slept little that night, so anxious was he to get out at daybreak and clear up the litter around the stack before the old man or even Dick Stark should see it.

## MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

The Persecuted Husband Who is No Afraid to Speak Out.

Detroit Free Press: Thank goodness that Christmas is over, and that Mr. Bowser can no longer hold it over me as a weapon to humiliate and terrify!

It was away back in June that he first began to refer to it. He lost his keys one day through a hole in his coat pocket, and as soon as he entered the house he turned that pocket wrong side out and exclaimed:

"Look at that, Mrs. Bowser—look at that! I believe you claim to be a wife and mother and house-keeper!"

"You have a hole in your pocket." "Oh, I have! And you can see it! You can actually see it!"

"You should have called my attention to it before, Mr. Bowser. I will mend it in about a minute."

"No you won't. A wife with no more interest in her husband's clothes than this should let them entirely alone! You have been the means of me losing all my keys, and now I will give you fair warning that you don't get no Christmas present out of me—not even a stick of gum!"

He got a damning needle and a piece of string and mended the hole himself, and as his keys were returned to him later in the day he apparently forgave me until the next time. Along in June he had a soft corn between his toes, and one evening he said:

"Seems to me you must have heard of some cure for a soft corn." "I have. A lady told me that soap and borax cured one for her. Shall I fix up some for you?"

He was delighted at the time, and I shaved up some soap, made the preparation and fussed over his foot for an hour. Next morning that corn was so sore he could not put on his shoes, and he limped around and yelled at me:

"You did it to secure revenge on me—you know you did! You expected blood-poisoning to set in!" "I simply told you what a lady told me."

"I don't believe anyone ever told you so! Soap and borax! Think of it! The stuff would kill a horse. I had planned, Mrs. Bowser, to make this a memorable Christmas for you, but now I'll be hanged if I do. You don't get as much out of me as you can put in your ear."

The corn got well in three or four days, and it was six weeks before Mr. Bowser had another opportunity to terrify me. One night I had to go down stairs for some medicine for baby, and when I started Mr. Bowser lay on his back, his knees drawn up, and his snore making the earth tremble. When I returned he was behind the door and I had to speak to him twice before he would come out.

"Mr. Bowser, what on earth ails you?" I demanded.

"Where have you been?" "Down stairs after the paregoric." "Did you upset a chair?" "Yes, I do believe you thought burglars were in the house, and you got up and hid behind the door."

"You believe that, do you?" he shouted, as he bravely walked around and looked over the banister.

"Well, there is something queer about it."

"Mrs. Bowser," he said, coming back to me, "you have cast reflection on my personal courage! Your object is to humiliate me! You know I was after my revolver, but you chose to cast a slur where another would have praised. I was thinking of diamonds for your Christmas present. I shall think no more. You won't get even a hair-pin from me!"

Three or four weeks passed away, and one evening he came home with a couple of tickets for the theatre and insisted that we go. We went. He did not like the play; somebody stole his gloves, and we missed the last car and had to walk a mile and a half. He restrained himself for

Continued on inside.