

scended without. A darkness that could be almost felt hung like a pall over everything.

With a shudder Susan Nickerson turned away from the window, and went back to the hearth where her husband sat. He had been an invalid for several weeks from an accident that had chanced to him while at work in the forest.

To the young wife the mountains and the wilderness about them were still a terrible dread. Reared in the southern part of the State, she had the year before become the wife of John Nickerson, who had been brought up at hardly a half-score miles from the spot where the cabin now stood.

The evening was now well advanced, but neither of them felt like retiring. The warning of the storm without alarmed her, and even he was not at ease. Never before could he remember when it had rained so hard for so long a time.

For several minutes the young couple sat in silence, while the rain poured down above them as though it would burst in the roof of the cabin. Above all the din thus made, the roaring of the Branch could be heard, and they knew it must be up to an unprecedented height.

"Father in heaven! what is that?" cried Susan, tottering to her feet pale with terror and undefined dread.

And it was no wonder that she uttered this exclamation. A dull booming sound rose above the roar of the rain, and they felt the floor of the cabin tremble beneath their feet.

"It must be thunder, Susan. I don't know what else it can be," said John, though in his heart he did not think it was.

"No, no, John, it was not that! I'm sure it can't be thunder. It seems to me as if one of the mountains has tumbled down. Hark! There it is again!" and she clutched her husband's arm in wild affright.

"Calm yourself, Susan. Don't give way to such fears," but in spite of his words he glanced toward the window with a thrill of apprehension.

But Susan was right, though he scoffed at the idea. The sounds they had heard, and which were repeated over and over again, came from the distant vale, where the crumpling mountains on either side doomed the Willey family to a terrible death, amid the gloom of that fearful night.

With her hand still on her husband's arm, the young wife stood trembling, while together they listened to the roaring elements without, that momentarily seemed to increase. The rain poured with such force on the roof that they could hardly hear each other's voices, but still above it the roar of the angry waters of the Branch could be plainly heard, and they could almost fancy they were moving the huge stones that lay thick in its bed.

As the minutes wore on, John Nickerson grew nervous in spite of all his efforts to keep calm. If the rain did not cease soon, the Branch would rise so that it would touch the cabin. But still it must be far away, he thought. For a short space there was a lull in the tempest. During that time the rain did not beat so fiercely as it had done, and then it was that John heard a noise which startled him from his seat. It was a sort of swashing sound, close at hand, like that made by an angry torrent against its bank. Lighting a pitch-torch, which in those days did service in many a household instead of lamp or candle, he, with the aid of his stick, hobbled to the door.

Opening it a little way he let the light flash out into the darkness. At the same moment a cry of alarm escaped him; nothing but a sea of dark, rushing water met his gaze. The Branch was claiming the whole valley for its own, and its torrents surging against the walls of the cabin, had made the swashing sound he had heard. Susan had followed her husband to the door, and at the sight of the peril surrounding them uttered a cry of terror.

"Oh John, we are lost!" she cried, wringing her hands.

"Not so bad as that, I hope, Susan. We are in no danger if the rain will only stop now." And he thrust the torch further out that he might, if possible, judge of the depth of the water.

But the rain dashed out the flame, and all was inky darkness about them. At that moment some large object borne down by the flood, struck against the cabin, making its solid logs tremble like an aspen. A moment after a stream of water came pouring along the floor from the upper side of the cabin.

"We must leave here," cried John. "I wonder if the dugout I've been at work upon has floated off? If it hasn't we can go over to the hill yonder easily."

He threw open the door as he said this, and plunged out into the water and the darkness.

"For the love of heaven be careful," cried Susan, wringing her hands, as he answered her cheerily back.

He floundered onward, and at last reached the spot where his half-finished canoe had lain. It was not there. A torrent of water dashed madly on where it had been.

At that moment the scene about him was

lighted up by a pale flash of light, followed by a roar from the mountains. Another heavy summit had crumbled, and the rocks striking together as they dashed down into the valley, produced the spectral light he saw around him. Though it filled him with alarm, it also rendered him a service. By its aid he saw, a few yards off, the canoe lodged against a clump of trees. Rejoiced at the sight, he at once hurried toward it, and soon had it in his possession.

"Courage!" he shouted to his wife in the doorway; "we're all right now."

But he was a long way from it. It was all he could do with his impaired strength to bring the canoe up to the doorway, and it took him so long to accomplish it that he was fearful the canoe would go tumbling down upon the head of Susan before he could reach her. But by persistent effort he succeeded at last, and said, as he struggled to hold it in its place: "Quick, Susan! Leave everything behind. Get in as soon as you can."

She obeyed, and with a stick which he had secured, he turned the prow of the canoe toward a high hill, where he knew they must be safe. But they knew they were not a moment too soon. When not three canoes' length from the cabin, it fell in with a crash, and in a mingled mass of rubbish their home went floating off down the Branch toward the raging river hardly a mile below. It was not without further danger that they gained their place of refuge and took shelter beneath an overhanging rock. Once they were nearly overturned by a boulder, and again struck by a floating tree, but at last to their great joy they struck the solid earth, and were saved.

It was indeed a night of horror, and the morning's sun shone over a scene of terrible desolation. Later they heard of the tragedy at the Notch, and theirs were grateful hearts that the same fate had not been meted out to them.

ALLIE'S LAST OFFER.

"It never rains but it pours." And Allie Arnold turned suddenly and looked disconsolately out of the window, only to see the raindrops coming down faster and faster, while the hot tears rolled steadily down her pretty cheeks, white now, whiter than the marble statues that fitted in every corner of Arnold Manor, the handsomest place on the Hudson. For Harry Arnold had made a great deal of money of late years, and expended a part of his wealth in fitting up his house like a perfect palace. He had only one daughter, Allie; her mother had died only two years before; so father and daughter lived on together—alone.

"Allie, I shall bring a gentleman from the city home to dinner to-day. You understand me, I suppose? Look your best; it is time you were married."

"I shall try and satisfy you with my appearance, father, but my pale cheeks will not help to captivate any young gentleman, I'm afraid." And, with a sigh, Allie turned toward her room, only to sit and dream of a lover far away, who never returned. Yes, Allie Arnold had loved Harry Wallace as truly as any woman could love; and he loved her. One word, foolishly spoken, had separated them; and he had gone away while she was slowly dying. How many lives are made miserable by one word hastily spoken!

She had mused so long that only one hour remained before dinner; so, rising, she commenced her simple toilette, which consisted of a simple white dress, while her only ornament was one pink bud fastened at the throat, and some myrtle woven in her dark auburn hair. As she approached the library door, her courage failed her; an expectation of something seemed to arouse her, and, opening the door, she stood before Harry Wallace.

"Allie!" With a glad cry he sprang forward, and would have grasped her hand; but one wave of it drove him back, while, with white lips, she spoke to him.

"Harry Wallace, I know you loved me once, and I loved you. But that is a thing of the past; it is dead. Two years ago, only one month after mother died, you left me; at first, I thought it too much to bear; but I finally conquered; that love is all in ashes, and you cannot fan dead ashes to flame again. No, 'tis dead—dead."

"Allie, darling listen; I have come back to ask you the second time to be my wife; we will be happy yet; won't you forgive and speak to me?"

But she had fainting in his arms.

Summer had come, and everything was in readiness for the grand picnic from Arnold Manor. It had been gotten up by Harry expressly for Allie, he thinking it would do her good, and a place near the beach had been selected. They were all light-hearted young people who sang their songs over the water morning, a merry, laughing crowd. And that while the boats were skimming smoothly along, a pair of lamid blue eyes watched the little eddies as they drifted off and away and were gone. Slowly the heavy lids drooped, and Allie Arnold was fast asleep, while "Feather the ear" rang gayly over the waters.

"Miss Arnold! Allie! Where can Allie be?" was the query of a bevy of young ladies and gentlemen.

"Oh, I dare say she is taking a stroll with some young gentleman," said Elsie Wallace

looked mischievously at her handsome brother as she spoke.

But Harry turned abruptly away, and looked where the boats were fastened and resting lazily for the day. What made him tremble? What made the great beads of perspiration roll down his face, while, with hands clenched, he stood looking with startled eyes on the cruel sea, while "Allie!" burst like a moan from his lips. What was his answer? Only the roar of the tide coming nearer and nearer, as the foam dashing fearlessly against the rocks, flouted out again to meet the breakers, while in the distance a little bark was floating over the waves. It was Allie's.

Not wishing to disturb her rest, her companions had arranged her comfortably on shawls and left her. The boat had broken from her moorings, and was now out on the ocean. Harry immediately gave the alarm, and half a dozen men quickly rowed to her rescue. Faster and faster they flew, and, until they were at her side, Harry was never tired of cheering them on. Allie was lying there, still and white, her hair falling over her shoulders in great, massy waves, while the gentle breeze, as it came playfully over the billows, seemed to kiss her pale cheek as if she was an old friend.

Allie started, and, as Harry lifted her in his arms, her head sank wearily on his shoulder, and in her ear he whispered— "Allie, again I have come for you; will you return to the shore my promised wife?"

But no answer came to the question; the pale lips were silent. His eager question fell on dull and heavy ears.

"Allie! Allie! Are you ill?" Slowly and softly the rowers plied their oars beachward, while Harry Wallace still supported the silent girl, and, as the friends on shore gathered to meet them, the lover yielded to their care a white, still form in which no spirit dwelt. Allie was dead—and he was bitterly punished.

SCIENTIFIC.

STEEL BARS INSTEAD OF BELLS.

Steel bars produce a very pure, distinct, and melodious sound, and possesses many advantages over church bells of moderate size. In Germany they are in some measure supplanting bells in church steeples, and an English publication, the *Choir*, advocates their general use, on the ground that while in point of sonorosity they are equal to the common bell, in certain other respects they are to be preferred to it. Thus, their weight will be light in comparison with the ponderous engines they are to replace. They will not burden the steeple so much, and consequently will give more scope for architectural design. Their winding and hanging up will not be so difficult, dangerous and expensive. They are not liable to crack, as is the case with bells, and are therefore adapted for use in any climate. They can be operated by a simple mechanical contrivance. The cost of these bars is so low that three or four of them, forming a peal, whose weight would be manufactured in England for \$40 or \$60, whereas three bells of the same power would cost five or six times as much. They can be made of any dimensions, weight, or power of sound. Every note or harmony can be produced more easily, and the tuning is obtained more precisely, than in cast bells. Of course these bars are also adapted for use wherever bells are now employed.—*Scientific Miscellany*.

TERRIBLE PREDICTIONS.

Few know the terrible import of the recent meeting of the American Scientific Association, at Portland. In its development of new horrors in store for poor humanity, it was awfully prolific. Its members vied with each other in predictions of coming convulsions of nature, and sustained their arguments with truths brought to light from the deepest and darkest wells of science. That humanity is to be obliterated was the gist of five papers, read by five of the most scientific, trusty, and celebrated members of the Association. A terrible and total extinction of animal life was foretold by all, the only question being, which of the five horrors would first develop itself, and perform the work of universal destruction.

THE SUN TO BE EXTINGUISHED.

Prof. Young, the most eminent living student of solar physics, read a paper on the sun. That body, he argued, is a gigantic bubble, whose crust is gradually thickening, and whose size is diminishing. There is a constant loss of heat, with its extinction as a producer of warmth and light. He quoted Faye, Secchi and others, to prove that the material of the sun is gaseous, and that the gases are retained by some kind of a crust. Through this surface the tumultuous inner composition is constantly spurting and outpouring, with grand violence. He thinks that this crust "may consist of a sheet of descending rain—not of water, of course, but of the materials whose vapors are known to exist in the solar atmosphere, and whose condensation and combination are supposed to furnish the solar heat." As this peculiar rain meets the gaseous substance of the sun, it collects into a continuous sheet, forming "a sort of bottomless ocean; resting upon the condensed vapors underneath, and pierced by innumerable ascending jets and bubbles." This action of the soul envelope will be a drenching of the great orb upon which we depend for heat and light.

It will grow smaller and more compressed, and surrounded by the crust, until it will be so hidden and muffled as to be practically excluded from the economy of the universe. The result will be intense cold and darkness, a cessation of all animal life, and an immediate return to original chaos.

THE BUBBLE EARTH TO BURST.

Gen. J. G. Barnard described the interior of the earth as a molten fluid. Previous notions had given the earth, however, a rigid exterior surface from one to two thousand feet deep. He refuted this theory, and claimed for the globe upon which we live somewhat the construction of a rubber ball filled with melted lead. The surface is, he thinks, a pliable coating, that has been gradually formed over the fiery mass inside. A globular form is maintained by rapid rotary motion, the inner fluid sustaining the soft shell in its position, so that the undulations are imperceptible to us. Thus we are being whirled through space on a huge globe, the surface of which floats on an interior of liquid fire. Only the rotary speed of this bubble keeps it together, and any disturbance or change in terrestrial phenomena would transform it all into a fluid that would resolve itself into vapor. Gen. Barnard does not believe that the surface is of an essentially different composition from the liquid interior—it has only been condensed sufficiently to form a sort of capsule. The tenure of the world's existence, therefore, is exceedingly uncertain. Any greatly disturbing influence—the breaking out of a huge volcano, any change in the surface that would render it brittle, the impact of a heavy meteor or comet—may, in a moment immolate it, leaving humanity to whirling death, amid the horrors of inorganic space.

DARKNESS, SILENCE AND DEATH.

Mr. H. F. Walling began an essay on the "Dissipation of Energy," by saying: "Since the days of the ancients it has been known that all motion is gradually developed, by friction, and must finally cease, unless maintained by external power." The heat of the sun, which he regarded as the motive power of the earth, is being exhausted by the prodigious lavishness of its expenditure. It is supposed, he said, that the satellite will fall into planets, the planets into suns, and suns into a common centre, after which, "darkness, silence and death will reign." He was not without a shadow of hope, however. He saw only two possible chances for a postponement, at least, of the dreadful catastrophe: First, a series of natural chemical evolutions attracting to the sun a vast amount of combustible material; and second, the infinite magnitude of the universe being sufficient to permit never ending concentration of masses. One dreaded effect of a loss of sun power, he said, is a displacement of atmospheric forces. Tidal influences or planetary collisions may hasten the dreadful catastrophe, which will be a slowing of the machinery of the universe, until growing stagnation culminates in a total extinction of life forces.

UNIVERSAL DROUGHT AND STARVATION.

Prof. Franklin B. Hough foretold a perpetual drought, the result of a clearing off of the forests. "The contrast," he said, "between an open and sunburnt pasture and one interspersed with clumps of trees, must have been noticed by every careful observer. The fact that furniture in houses too much shaded will mould, is an instance of the humid influence of trees, and the results of woodland shade explain the fulness of springs and streams in the forest, which dry up and disappear when the trees are removed." The rapidity with which forests are disappearing has already been a matter of alarm; but when we consider the effect upon streams—practical illustrations of large ones being lessened and small ones extinguished—there is cause for fright. Land will become unwatered, and consequently sterile; crops will lessen in volume until the arid and treeless plains refuse to respond to the incitement of the farmer; universal famine will ensue; and the world, entirely depopulated by starvation, will sink into uninhabitativeness, until some new change calls another form of life into existence.

INSECTS TO END THE HUMAN RACE.

Dr. Le Conte, the new President of the Association, read a paper on the enormous increase and destructiveness of injurious insects. The present actual damage done by insects to crops in the United States is over three millions of dollars, yet these figures give but an inkling of what the increase promises for the future. "Just now," says Dr. Le Conte, "a portion only of the insect tribes are sufficiently numerous by nature to inflict injury on man and his possessions, but civilization destroys the balance of life, which naturally keeps down increase, and permits in the case of insects—those previously insignificant in numbers—to become prominent factors in a work of destruction." The only method suggested by this scientist to avert a calamitous plague, were to "abandon the crops and starve out the noxious insects," or to establish "a system of checks on their increase equivalent to those existing before civilization interfered." Either of these plans are, of course, impracticable. The impending dilemma seems to be such an increase of insects that the plagues of Egypt will be more than reproduced, and that all vegetation, and finally starving and helpless man himself, will be eaten.

All of which augurs an early dropping of the curtain upon the fleeting show of life. We quote:

"I would not live always; I ask not to stay Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way; The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here Are enough for life's woes—full enough for its cheer."

MARVELLOUS.

Among other wonders of Brazil is the wonderful pottery tree of Para. This tree attains a height of one hundred feet before sending out branches; the stem is very slender, seldom much exceeding one foot in diameter at the base. The wood is hard, and contains a large amount of silica—not so much, however, as the bark, which is largely employed as a source of silica in the manufacture of pottery. In preparing the bark for the potter's use it is first burned, and the residue is then pulverized and mixed with clay in varying proportion. With an equal quantity of the two ingredients a superior quality of ware is produced. It is very durable, and will bear almost any amount of heat. The natives employ it for all culinary purpose. When fresh the bark cuts like soft sandstone, and the presence of silica may be readily ascertained by grinding a piece of the bark between the teeth.

A FEMALE TRAVELLER.

"M. Quid" "took charge of a lady" on a railroad car, the other day, and thus details his woes: Perhaps the man meant to do a favor when he came up to me at the depot, with a spinster hanging on his arm, and wanted to know if I wouldn't take charge of her from Chicago to Detroit. Many men think a railroad journey rendered really pleasant by the companionship of an unprotected female. She insisted on counting her hand-box and travelling-bags as soon as we got seated. She counted. There were just two. I counted and made no more or less. Then she wanted her parasol put in the rack; her shawl folded up, and her hand-box counted again. There was just exactly one hand-box of it. As we got started she wanted to know if I was sure we were on the right road to Detroit. I was sure. Then she wanted her travelling-bag counted. I counted it. By this time she wanted the window up, and I asked me if it wasn't a hot day. I said it was. Then she felt for her money, and found that it was safe, though she was sure that she had lost it. While counting it she related how Mrs. Graff, in going East about five years ago, lost her purse and three dollars. She wound up the story by asking me if it wasn't a hot day. I said it was. Then she wanted her hand-box counted, and I counted him. He was still one hand-box. There was a pause of five minutes, and then she wanted a drink. I got it for her. Then she wanted to know if we were on the right road to Detroit. I assured her that I was—positive to the fact. The brakeman here called out the name of the station in such an indistinct way that the lady wanted me to go and see what the name really was. I went. It was Calumet. She wanted to know if I was sure that it was Calumet, and I put my hand on my sacred heart and assured her that I would perish sooner than deceive her. By this time she wanted her travelling-bag counted, and I counted her. She figured up as before. I had just finished counting, when she wanted to know if I didn't think it was a hot day. I told her I did. We got along very well for the next half hour, as I got her narrating a story about how she got lost in the woods eighteen years before, but as soon as she finished it she wanted to know if I was sure we were on the right road to Detroit. I told her that I hoped to perish with the liars if she were not, and she was satisfied. Then the parasol fell down; she wanted me to change a ten cent piece, and the window had to go down. When we got down to Marshall, she wanted to know if the place wasn't named after court martial, and whether it wasn't barely possible that the station was Niles instead of Marshall. The hand-box was counted again and he was just one. Then the window went up, and she asked me if, in my opinion, it wasn't a hot day. I replied that it was. Then she related a story about her uncle, and another about a young lady who had been deaf several years. During the day I counted that hand-box 300 times; raised the window thirty times; and said it was a hot day until my tongue was blistered; arranged that parasol twenty-one times; got her sixteen drinks of water, and enquired the names of thirteen stations. She said it was so nice to have a man in whom a stranger could place confidence, and I dared not reply for fear of bringing out another story. When we reached Detroit I counted the things three times over, hopped her off the cars, got her a hack, directed her to a hotel, told her the street, price, name of the landlord, head-waiter, and cook; assured her she would not be robbed nor murdered; that Detroit had a population of 100,000; that the fall term of school had commenced; that all Detroit hack-drivers were honest and obliging. Poor woman! I hope the landlord didn't get out of patience with her artless ways.—*Detroit Free Press*.

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