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## Poetry.

### THE DEAD LETTER.

And can it be? Ah, yes, I see,  
This thirty years and better  
Since Mary Morgan sent to me  
This dusty, rusty letter.  
A pretty hand (she couldn't spell),  
As any man must vote it,  
And 'twas as I remember well,  
A pretty hand that wrote it!

How calmly now I view it all,  
As memory backward ranges—  
The talks, the walks, that I recall,  
And then—the postal changes!  
How well I loved her I can guess  
(Since cash is Cupid's hostage)—  
Just one and sixpence—nothing less—  
This letter cost in postage!

The love that wrote at such a rate  
(By Jove! it was a steep one!)  
Five hundred notes (I calculate)  
Was certainly a deep one;  
And yet it died—of slow decline—  
Perhaps suspicion chilled it;  
I've quite forgotten if 'twas mine  
Or Mary's darling killed it!

At last the fatal message came:  
"My letters—please return them;  
And I yours of course you wish the same—  
I'll send them back or burn them."  
Two precious fools, I must allow,  
Whichever was the greater:  
I wonder if I'm wiser now,  
Some seven lustres later?

And this alone remains! Ah, well!  
These words of warm affection,  
The faded ink, the pungent smell,  
Are food for deep reflection.  
They tell of love the heart contrives  
To change with fancy's fashion,  
And how a drop of passion survives  
The strongest human passion!

## Miscellany.

### The Amazon.

The whole extent of the area of the valley is covered with forests, and is not like other plains under the tropics, partly desert and partly vegetation. The whole of the Amazon valley is covered with a luxuriant vegetation, and this vegetation is sometimes so dense that it is almost impenetrable, and of its characteristics in this respect, he would give some account. The river Amazon runs through three different regions, each presenting a different aspect and characteristic from the other. In the lower part of its course three tributaries join the Amazon—one of them rising in the high table land of Guiana, and the Rio Negro the northern shore, which latter has its source in the mountains of Bolivia. These tributaries are of great dimensions, and the whole basin of the Amazon is full after having received their waters. It is from the junction of these rivers that the great river itself receives its name, and from thence extends to the Atlantic Ocean. That part of the Amazon which occupies the middle part of the continent is called Slenock. The southern shore of the Amazon, below its junction with the Madeira, receives other rivers, three of which flow from the southern slopes of the table land of Brazil. To the east of the Rio Negro there are a number of other rivers flowing into the Amazon, hardly known among us by name, and yet of very great importance, and remarkable for their peculiar character. There are among these tributaries four rivers so broad that we have hardly any river so broad, though their courses are not very long. These at their mouths are over thirty miles wide, and some of them over sixty miles wide. Following the southern shore of the Amazon to its mouth, you behold an entrance so wide, that it is as if the wide ocean were spreading before you, and you were passing from a river to the open sea. These rivers are comparatively shallow, and their current is very light; the natural consequence is that they carry little material in suspension, and their waters are therefore clear and transparent, but somewhat tinged by vegetable substance to a greenish hue. Others of these waters are tinged with grey, and others again are yellowish.

The river Madeira is totally different from those. It is a very deep river, flowing rapidly, and carrying with it a large amount of loose material, giving the water a whitish colour, from which circumstances the Madeira is called "White Water River." There are three tributaries called "White Water River," but they differ materially from the Madeira, though, like it, are very deep. They are very tortuous and meandering, and destitute of

islands, while the Madeira has several islands. The consequence is, these rivers can be navigated to a distance of five hundred miles by large boats drawing fifteen or eighteen feet, with as much ease as they could navigate in streams of the Amazon. The Rio Negro presents a very different aspect; it is very wide, but less deep, and has a very slow course, as is dark and transparent, owing to the large amount of vegetable matter held in solution in the water, and when seen from above it looks as dark as ink. Therefore, not only in the width and depth, and bulk of water, but also in the characteristics of the water, every region of the Amazon has its peculiar character. The Amazon as a whole, is a white water river. The mouth of the Amazon, where it enters the Atlantic, is one hundred and fifty miles wide. It is the widest, largest, and of the greatest volume of all known rivers. The lecturer then proceeded to give a brief description of the productions of the region of the Amazon, enumerating the costly dye-woods, medicinal plants, and the valuable timber which grows in great abundance in the valley, and which at present forms but a small and meagre source of traffic. The liberal policy of the Emperor of Brazil would, however, change all this, as he expected ere long to see the whole country of the Amazon and the Andes opened by the enterprise of the American people.—[Agassiz.]

### Trials of New Settlers in Canada.

Another trial claiming notice is that of wild beasts. Bears have carried off children, indulged in fresh pork, and haggled the hunter to death; but such occurrences are rare, and generally Brin prefers running to fighting. He prefers vegetable diet to animal, and loves such dainties as nuts and berries. Green corn and green oats are especial favorites, and the back settler has oftentimes had to mourn the destruction of much of his crops by bands of these marauders. The raon, too, is an efficient hand in this kind of work, being at one with the bear in the opinion that green corn is good eating. These freebooters often pay dear for their good cheer, and in turn supply the owner of the crops with excellent meals from their flesh, while their skins can be sold, or manufactured into sleigh robes.

In securing such gentry, the dead-fall, the trap and set gun, are common means employed. On one occasion the writer had the good luck to kill two bears at one shot with a set gun—the accompanying animals pelling the trigger themselves, thus committing suicide. Another method of dealing with these robbers is, erecting stages in the invaded fields and looking them therefrom, without the intervention of judge or jury. An old veteran settler, who had fought under Sir John Moore and in nearly every battle of the Peninsular War, tried the stage plan to compass the enemy; but always did so with fixed bayonet, in case, as he observed, of coming to close quarters. One night as he stood sentry, a formidable fellow in dark dress entered an appearance, and began, as usual, to feast on our hero's corn. A well aimed shot stretched Bruin on the ground; but to make all sure, the gallant warrior charged and gave the foe the full benefit of his trusty steel.

Wolves are more dangerous and more destructive customers. Many a flock of sheep has been thinned, and sometimes all destroyed by their incursions. Sometimes they will attack a man. An instance within the writer's knowledge occurred several years ago. One cold winter night as the schoolmaster of a back settlement was passing through a strip of woods between two clearings, a numerous pack of these ravenous animals fell on his track, and set up a most unearthly howl that well might frighten the poor pedagogue out of his wits. He concluded it was all up with him as they came bounding towards him. Fortunately he was young and nimble, and having no desire to be made a supper of by such fellows, he managed to climb a tree just in time to save his skin. His cap and mittens, in the hurry, were left behind, and these the disappointed scamps tore to shreds, and evinced their rage by gnawing the bark of the tree and scratching the snow at a furious rate. The unfortunate schoolmaster was serenaded for some two hours by the most unusual sounds that ever saluted human ears. Each hour seemed a day, and, as he shivered aloft, he began to think seriously of the likelihood of freezing to death or falling down to be eaten up after all. However, longer days were in store for him. The pack left for other game, and he escaped, and yet lives a useful member of society. More than thirty winters have passed over the head of our friend since he was "freed" by wolves, and his hairs are whitening by the frost of age; but he retains a vivid remembrance of the event, and gratefully acknowledges the good hand of the Almighty in sparing his life.

Other animals are troublesome and thievish, particularly in invading the henroost. The porcupine and skunk are occasionally unpleasant neighbors—the former by lodging its quills in your dog's body, and the latter by the horrid stench by which you recognize its presence. Both these

however, act on the principle of letting alone if left alone; but Master Fox, whose morality is much more lax, is a thief of the first water. Many a does does he disgust the good wife by large drafts on her poultry yard, thereby disappointing her of an intended roast or choice fowls for market.—[From "Rustic Jottings from the Bush," in New Dominion Monthly for Nov.]

### Our Cold Weather.

The more even nature of the weather in Canada must strike old country people favorably. Considering the absurd stories about our climate which are widely circulated at home, we have a right to expect emigrants to be agreeably surprised with the reality. In a geography published in Britain, the cold of Canada is represented as being so severe that no part of the body can be exposed during the winter without the certainty of being frost-bitten, and the entire person must be enveloped in furs before venturing out of doors!

In the April number of Spurgeon's "Sword and Trowel" for 1870, is an article on the distinguished missionary, Wm. Burns. In this article occurs the following language:—"In Canadian winters it is not usual for people to get weather-bound; and if excess for not keeping a preaching appointment, or for not filling up one's pew, can ever be pleaded conscientiously, it is when the primitive roads, enveloped in snow-drifts, only allow the preacher or hearer to be dragged to chapel during a full in the storm by a team of twenty horses" at the rate of a mile an hour.

What will Canadians think of this picture of Canada experience, drawn in this enlightened day for the great city of London, only ten days distant from the land so misrepresented? Who among us ever saw such snow drifts, such a team—unless drawing lasts—or such an accommodating lull? This descriptive piece partakes of the character of one of the Falls of Niagara, to be seen in a "Reader" once extensively used in common schools wherein it is stated that Indians in their canoes have been known to descend in safety the mighty cataract, and which is as truly true as the legend of the Chaudiere at Ottawa.

In a Gazetteer of no mean pretensions, it is stated that the great Chaudiere is the mouth of a subterranean channel whose extent and direction is unknown; that a cow which had fallen into its boiling waters disappeared, but came up all right at Foxe's Point, ten miles below. It happens that Foxe's Point is more than twice ten miles down the river; but a few miles makes no difference in a big story.—[From New Dominion Monthly for November.]

Who GETS THE BEST TEA?—Russia has got the monopoly of China—in tea. "A Lover of Fine Tea" has written to say that such is the case. All the choice "chops" of Congou brought to the Hankow market this season, he says, have been bought for the Russian market, and shipped direct to Odessa. Not a single "chop" of the finest grade of first crop tea has been seen in England since the growth of 1871, neither will there be of 1872. "Why is this?" The puffing and professional cheap selling of the retail grocer and tea dealer has brought it about. They pretend to offer the finest tea at 2s. 6d. to 3s. per pound. The thing is absurd. It cannot be. Fine tea costs the "importer" more money. The Russians outbid us, because they are willing to pay a fair price for the best article. The Americans appropriate nearly all the choice greens, although that is hardly an evil. But it is really too bad that John Bull should, through his bargain-hunting spirit, not be able to get a good cup of tea. We must be prepared to pay 4s. per pound if we wish to enjoy—and who does not?—the aroma of the choice and fragrant Pekoe.—[London paper.]

CRITICISING NEWSPAPERS.—It is a very easy matter to criticise a newspaper; but to publish a live one so as to interest, amuse and instruct the public, is no small undertaking. Those in this community who are disposed to find fault with every little item, which does not suit their critical and exalted ideas, and complain because some scrap of news received while paper was being printed did not appear in its pages, should buy type, ink and paper, and publish an organ of their own. Let them try it for three months only, and if it don't give them some idea of the newspaper business, then we are no judge of human nature. The conceit would be taken out of such individuals so quickly that they would hardly know what was the matter with them, or whether they stood on their heads or feet.—Exchange.

A love letter picked up in Springfield, Ill. had the following paragraph:—"My best loved one, I clawed the postage stamp on your last letter all to shander, because I knew you liked it on."

Not long since a countryman, while on his way to London, was stopped on the highway by a thief, and requested to hand over his

money or have his brains blown out. Ol said the traveller quietly—blow away, blow away. It's better to go on to London without brains than without money.

### BAGDAD.

Toward the close of the eighth century the house of Abbas founded on the banks of the Tigris the metropolis of the Mohammedan faith. Bagdad arose in the midst of a secure filled with the fame of ruined cities. Not far off was Babylon, still faintly traced out on its desolate plain, the stone pictures of Nineveh, and the palaces of Seleucia; closer still were the lofty towers of Myddel. The fallen cities it is said, were filled to complete the grandeur of the sacred capital; the Saracens preyed up on the last labors of the Assyrians, and the wealth of the Moslem world and of the conquered Christians was employed in providing a proper home for the vicegerent of Heaven. Mohammedan writers labor with vain efforts to paint the splendor of Bagdad when, under the vigorous rule of Haroun al-Raschid and his vizier, Jaffar, it suddenly out-tripped in prosperity and business all contemporary cities. It was the central shrine of the Moslem faith. The Commander of the Faithful ruled over its people. The power of Haroun was felt in distant Spain and on the banks of the Indus; the Tigris labored once more beneath the commerce of mankind; the merchants of Egypt and of India met in the bazars of Bagdad; the Christian and the fire worshiper, the Brahmin and the Jew, filled its prosperous streets.

It is not probable, therefore, that the Arab accounts are greatly exaggerated. Bagdad possessed a powerful citadel, a circle of lofty walls, a royal palace on the Tigris whose end and less halls were adorned with all the graces of Saracenic architecture, and mosques of unequalled splendor. It was the most populous city of its age when Rome was a half-deserted ruin, when London and Paris were vainly striving to make his capital, in the wilderness of Flanders, a centre of Western progress. The humane spirit of early Mohammedanism had filled Bagdad with hospitals, dispensaries, and offices of public charity. The private houses of its wealthy merchants were adorned with marble and gold. The graceful court was filled with fountains; rich hangings of silk and velvet covered the lofty walls. Divans of satin and tables of costly workmanship, the richest fruits and flowers, and the rarest wines and viands, set off those early banquets at which degenerate descendants of Mohammed delighted to violate every principle of their austere law.

But still more remarkable was the intellectual position of the Eastern capital. The renown of Babylon or Nineveh had been altogether material; the children of the desert surrounded themselves with all the refinements of literature and the arts. The wealthy Arabs were educated in poetry, music and the languages; common schools were provided, at which the humblest citizen might learn to read and write with accuracy the favorite precepts of the Koran. College, taught by professors of eminent attainments, drew in throngs of students. Libraries, enriched by the gifts of Greek and Roman thought, teeming with countless volumes, avowed a boundless ardor for letters. The Arab annals abound with notices of famous scholars, renowned in every land where Arabic was spoken; of poets, historians, and men of science who had charmed the advancing intellect of the children of the Arabian sands. The caliphs of Bagdad were eager to discover a lost manuscript or to enlarge their well-stored libraries as Cosmo or Lorenzo; the Petrarchs and Boccaccios of the Mohammedan capital were rewarded with useful bounty, and were the friends of princes and emirs. Bagdad became the centre of a vigorous mental progress whose impulse was at length felt in all the barbarous capitals of Christendom.—[From "Cities and their Fate," by Eugene Lawrence, in Harper's Magazine for November.]

POST AND PARSONS.—The following fresh trifle from an English party is not bad:—  
I was one morning overtaken by an active, hale old fellow, who had been a soldier and seen a great deal of service, but was at the time a river bagman. In our journey we passed a directing post, with arms in good condition, and containing full information.

Do you know what that is? said my companion.  
A directing post of course.  
"I call it a parson."  
A parson? Why?  
"Cause 'ee tell 'em the way, but don't go."  
Before we separated we passed a second post, which was very dilapidated, and had lost its arms.

If the post we saw just now were a parson, said I, what's a this one?  
"Oh, he's a bishop."  
Explain.  
He neither tell'th nor go'th.—Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine, Nov.

### Ancient Time-pieces.

Bowls were used to measure time, from which water, drop by drop, was discharged through a small aperture. Such bowls were called water clocks. It was then observed how much water from such a bowl or cask, from sun rise to the shortest shadow, trickled down into another bowl placed beneath; and this time being the half of the whole solar day, was divided into six hours. Consequently, they took a sixth of the water which had trickled down, poured it into the upper bowl, and this discharged, one hour expired. But afterwards a more convenient arrangement was made. They observed how high the water at each hour rose in the lower bowl, marked these points, and counted them, thus finding out how many hours there were till sunrise. With the Chinese, the water clocks, or clepsydras, were very old. They used a round vessel, filled with water, with a hole in the bottom, which was placed upon another vessel. When the water in the upper vessel passed down into the lower vessel, it subsided by degrees, announcing thereby the part of time elapsed.

The Babylonians are said to have used such instruments; from them the Greeks of Asia Minor got them, at the time of King Cyrus, about the year 550 before Christ. But the Romans did not get the first water clock before the year 160 before Christ. Although the hours of the clepsydras did not vary in length, they still count d them from the morning.—When the clock as it strikes seven, the ancient count-down; when the clock with its strikes twelve, the ancient counted six and so forth. This method of counting the hour was according to the New Testament, also customary in Palestine at the time of Christ. The water clocks had the advantage that they could be used in the night and the Romans used them to divide their night watches, which were relieved four times, both summer and winter. Conformable to these four night watches, a time was counted, not only in Rome, but wherever a Roman garrison was stationed; consequently, also in Palestine, after she had become a Roman province.

ANECDOTE OF EZEKIEL WEBSTER.—In these latter days when the office of the Surgeon is the theatre of so much unseemly wrangle over the wills of testators that men who have property to leave may sometimes despair of their wishes being carried out, an anecdote of Ezekiel Webster, brother of the "good-like," may be aptly quoted:

"When in full practice he was employed to defend the will of Roger Perkins, of Hopkinton. The physician made affidavit that the testator was struck with death when he signed his will. Mr. Webster subjected his testimony to a most thorough examination, showing, by quoting medical authorities, that doctors disagree as to the precise moment when a dying man is struck with death; some affirming that it is at the commencement of the fatal disease, others at its climax, and others still affirming that we begin to die as soon as we are born.

"I should like to know," said Mr. Sullivan, the opposing counsel, "what doctor maintains that theory?"

Dr. Watts, said Mr. Webster, with great gravity:  
"We all begin to die."  
The reply convulsed the Court and audience with laughter.—Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine for November.

### Franks of a Steam Toller.

A singular accident happened the other day in the streets of London. It appears that a large roller was in Pall Mall on its way to St. James' Park, to be used on some paving work. At 12 o'clock the driver of the engine concluded to go and get his dinner. He therefore, shut off steam and left the engine standing near a statue in front of the Pall Mall Restaurant. A crowd of people gathered around including some mischievous boys, one of whom got on the engine and managed in some way to start it. This done the lad ran away. The locomotive to the dismay of the bystanders, started off at first slowly, but continually increasing its speed, and presently spread consternation all around. Its first direction was for the statue, which it would probably have overthrown if not demolished; but when close up to it, the engine turned capriciously almost at a right angle, and went straight across to the shop of Mr. Thompson, photographic colorist. Its entrance was effected by the window, which was totally smashed, and not only this, but the heavy stone facade underneath the glass was also shattered to fragments. Several ladies standing in front of the window were slightly hurt, and one gentleman seriously. Two other ladies fainting in the crowd, and being trampled under foot, received bad though not dangerous injuries. The devastation committed by the unruly machine in the window, which was full of pictures and other fragile articles, is said to be irreparable, and it is easy to believe that a bull in a china shop could have been nothing to it.