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# THE FALL OF PANAMÁ

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And Other Isthmian Rhymes and  
Sketches

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by  
James Stanley Gilbert

Forgotten Books

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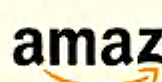
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# Forgotten Books

## The Fall of Panamá

And Other Isthmian Rhymes and Sketches

By

James Stanley Gilbert

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# THE FALL OF PANAMÁ

AND OTHER ISTHMIAN  
RHYMES AND SKETCHES  
BY J. S. GILBERT

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INTRODUCTION BY  
TRACY ROBINSON

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1894

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## YO PREGUNTO.

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*Is he the greatest poet who doth sing  
With voice attuned unto a perfect lyre,  
In accents flawless and with Sapphic fire,  
And thus unto the erudite doth bring  
Lost thoughts of ancient classics 'round which cling  
The glammers of scholastic memories—  
Till, once again, the captive fancy flies  
To roam the sacred groves on dreamful wing :  
Or, is the humbler minstrel greater still,  
Whose untrained voice and harp with discords oft  
May vex the sense ; but whose true notes, so soft,  
And long and sweet, the very soul do thrill  
With feeling that the most untutored mind  
May know as purest love for all mankind ?*



**Dedicated**

*TO*

*COLONEL A. L. RIVES.*



## INTRODUCTORY.

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**L**IFE on the Isthmus of Panama has some interesting and peculiar features. The geographical isolation being practically complete, except by sea, it follows that a narrow strip of country along the Panama Railroad is all that Modern Civilization can boast of having captured. Nor is there evidence that any astonishing advances have yet been made within even this limited zone. The jungle still holds sway and defies the schoolmaster. Intellectual life, like most other luxuries, has been an imported article. Among those who have from time to time held official positions in the different Companies, or who have been engaged in other business pursuits, there has now and then been one who has caught the spirit of the place and has had the surprising energy to write interestingly of his surroundings.

That this has been the case with my friend, the writer of the following pages, is my own firm conviction, and it gives me pleasure to believe that the public will agree with me.

## INTRODUCTORY.

These poems and sketches have been evolved from an inner consciousness the visible and outward environment of which has been an active business life. They have been penned while others slept, or were engaged in some other engrossing tropical employment quite as intellectual. The somewhat limited local audience to which they were addressed has been greatly pleased, and it would give the numerous friends of their Author much gratification to know that a wider public had endorsed the verdict.

TRACY ROBINSON.

COLON, November 15, 1893.

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# *THE FALL OF OLD PANAMA.*

1671.

His Catholic Majesty, Philip of Spain,  
Ruled o'er the West Coast, the Indies and Main;  
His ships heavy-laden with pesos and plate,  
Sailed o'er the South Sea, with tribute of state.  
From Lima and Quito his galleys pulled forth,  
For Panama pearls and the gold of the North;  
And cargoes of treasure were sent overland,  
While his soldiers kept guard from the gulf to the strand.  
From Panama Bay to the port "Name of God,"  
Long freight trains of slaves thro' the dense forests trod:  
Then, some through the Straits and some from the Main,  
King Philip's good ships sought their owner again.

On England's grand throne, great Elizabeth reigned,  
And on sea and on land her power maintained;  
O'er the hearts of her subjects, o'er the conquests they made,  
O'er their lives and their fortunes, her scepter she swayed.  
But her title of "Queen of the Seas" to dispute,  
King Philip essayed, from the land of the lute;  
And velvet-clad Dons, cast their love-songs aside  
To battle the English, and wind, wave and tide.  
And fiercely and bravely the struggle they waged,  
And in many and mortal affray they engaged;  
But the men of old Devon—the "Stout Hearts of Oak"—  
As often successfully parried each stroke.



The Drakes and the Gilberts, the Granvils and Leighs,  
The Oxenhams, Raleighs—the props and the stays  
Of England's first greatness—were the heroes of old,  
Who helped Britain's Queen to the Spanish King's gold !  
They robbed the arch-robber of ill-gotten gain,  
And brought England the glory, they wrested from Spain.  
His galleons they captured, his treasure trains seized—  
Out-fought him abroad, and with zeal unappeased  
At home they defeated the Armada's great fleet,  
And laid a world's spoil at Elizabeth's feet !

Alas ! that such deeds should grow dim with the years !  
Alas ! that such men should have trained Buccaneers !  
That from such examples—so noble, so true—  
A race of marauders and ruffians grew !  
That fiends such as Morgan should follow the wake  
Of men like John Oxenham and Sir Francis Drake,  
Who swore by the Oak, by the Ash and the Thorn—  
God helping them, always—to sail 'round the Horn  
To fair Panama and the placid South Sea,  
Which they saw one day from the top of the tree.  
For Old England's glory their standard to raise,  
And to cruise the Pacific and its isle-dotted bays.

Four miles from where Ancon, looks down on the New,  
Stood Old Panama, whence Pizarro once drew  
His bravest of followers, Peru to obtain  
And her Incas subject to the power of Spain.  
Where once stood cathedrals and palaces fair,  
Whose altars and vessels and tapestries rare,  
Were the pride of a people whose opulence then,  
Was the envy of kings and the longing of men ;

## THE FALL OF OLD PANAMA.

Where once stately streets to the plains stretched away,  
And warehouses skirted the vessel-lined bay ;  
Where plantations and gardens and flowering trees,  
Once perfumed the tropical evening breeze,—  
Stands nought but a ruin, half hidden from view !  
A pirate's foul gift to his blood-thirsty crew !

From sacked Porto Bello, red-handed they came,  
All blood-stained from conquest unworthy the name !  
To the mouth of the Chagres, where high on the hill,  
San Lorenzo kept guard—to plunder and kill  
Its devoted defenders, who courageously fought  
For homes, wives and children, accounting as nought  
Their lives held so precious, so cherished before,  
Could they drive the fierce pirates away from their shore.  
Three days they repulsed them, but to find every night  
The foe still upon them, in ne'er-ending fight !  
Their arms could not conquer the powers of hell !  
San Lorenzo surrendered—ingloriously fell !  
Burned, famished and bleeding from many a wound,  
They lay while their stronghold was razed to the ground.

On, on up to Cruces the Buccaneers sped,  
But to find it in ashes, its inhabitants fled !  
Yet on and still on, with Morgan ahead,  
They pressed down the road that to Panama led.  
Nine days through the forest unbroken they tramped,  
And at last on a mount near the City encamped.  
Before them the ocean for leagues away rolled ;  
Below them the islands lay bathed in the gold  
Of the sun, that just setting, looked mournfully down,  
On the last day of life for the ill-fated town ;

## THE FALL OF OLD PANAMA.

While around them the plains with groves of bright trees,  
Sheltered fountains and cattle their wants to appease.  
The famed "Golden Cup" lay filled at their hand,  
And to drain it at sunrise, the Buccaneers planned.  
"Oh, ho ! for the morrow," quoth Morgan the Bold !  
"Oh, ho ! for the day, and the tale to be told !"

The dawn's faintest purple had scarce 'gan to light  
The peak of Ancon, erst hid in the night,  
When the blare of the trumpet and beat of the drum,  
Made known that the day of the struggle had come.  
In the camp of the pirates, "To arms !" is the cry ;  
"Press forward, my hearties, our treasure is nigh !  
Avoid the main road, there are ambuscades there !  
Push on thro' the forest ! Your fire-arms prepare !"  
Now out on the hill, still called the "Advance,"  
The Buccaneers over their enemy glance.  
Before them they see in the full light of day,  
The Spaniards arranged in battle array !  
Two squadron of horse, four thousand of line,  
With bullocks and peons, their forces combine ;  
And then, were it safer for them to retreat,  
Would Morgan have ordered the signal to beat ;  
Too late it is now—it is triumph or die !  
Tho' desperate to battle, 'twere folly to fly !  
"'Tis useless to falter ! On ! Onward, my men !  
We have won against odds ! We shall win once again !"

And "On !" cried the Spaniards, shouting "Viva el Rey !"  
"Our numbers are greater ! Ours, ours is the day !  
Our bullocks will rout them ! Huzza for Old Spain !  
The gore of the thieves shall enrichen the plain !"

## THE FALL OF OLD PANAMA.

Alas ! for the hopes, so sadly misplaced—  
For never before such a foe had they faced !  
No Indians now, but trained men of might  
Who had learned in stern schools to die and to fight !  
Two hours they fought 'neath the tropical sun,  
Then threw down their muskets, and—Morgan had won !  
The verdant savanna like a great river runs,  
With the blood of six thousand of Panama's sons !  
“On ! On to the City !” cries Morgan the Bold !  
“Oh, ho ! 'tis the day, and the tale is soon told !”

Then awful the combat, as over the walls,  
The blood-thirsty pirate in eagerness falls !  
With Spartan-like valor, did the sons of those who  
Had assisted Pizarro to conquer Peru,  
Attempt to o'erpower the fierce Buccaneer,—  
To save City and home, and all they held dear !  
But vainly they struggle—repulsed o'er and o'er,  
The robbers return to the battle once more !  
At last they are vanquished ! “Now, comrades, we'll sup  
On the riches we find, in the West's Golden Cup.”

Fire, pillage and slaughter ! the order goes round,  
Till palace and cottage are burned to the ground ;  
Till cathedral and warehouse no treasures contain,  
And in the whole City no gold doth remain.  
Till mother and daughter are captured and chained  
With father and brother, or ransom obtained !  
Monasteries and hospitals—down with them all !  
Leave not a stone standing on yon City wall !  
“Ho ! ho ! 'tis the day,” quoth Morgan the Bold !  
“Ho ! ho ! 'tis the day, and the tale is now told !”

## THE FALL OF OLD PANAMA.

Oh, demon insensate ! Oh, offspring of hell !  
What pen may thine awful enormities tell !  
How picture the cruelties, useless and vain,  
Upon the march back through the forest again !  
Old men tottering feebly, 'neath Time's hoary crown,  
Frail women in chains and with burdens borne down !  
Fresh youth and grown man, and the child but just born,  
Scourged pitt'lessly on, with the lash and the thorn ;  
While sobs, lamentations and shrieks of despair,  
Unceasingly freighted the soft summer air !  
The ink turns to tears and corrodes the sad pen,  
O'er the tortures at Cruces, repeated again !  
There, under the shade of the great mango trees,  
'Mid anguish that nothing may ever appease,  
Are parents and children, and husbands and wives,  
Condemned without mercy, to horrible lives !

Then back down the Chagres, the Buccaneers hie,  
To where ships near the castle, awaiting them lie ;  
And embarked with his slaves, his treasure and gold,  
Once again for Port Royal, sails Morgan the Bold !



## *THE LAND OF THE CACIQUE.*

Near the bluffs of Portobelo,  
Where the fortress still is standing  
Near the moss-clad old cathedral  
That the Dons built long ago ;  
Eight degrees from the Equator,  
From the southward counting northward,  
Lies the land of the Cacique—  
Lies the region of San Blas.  
There the skies are soft and tender,  
And the clouds draw wondrous pictures  
'Round the crimson sun, disrobing  
For his sleep beneath the sea ;  
And the monarch of the forest,  
The majestic palm tree, waveth  
Shining, multi-sceptred branches  
O'er a kingdom all its own.  
There the almond tree doth flourish,  
There the gorgeous mango groweth  
Close beside the lustrous caucho,  
And the tagua strews the ground ;  
There, upon the sylvan hill-sides  
And within the lovely valleys,  
Nestles many an Indian village,  
Of the slender bamboo built.

## THE LAND OF THE CACIQUE.

'Tis a lyric of these people,  
Of their customs quaint and curious,  
Of the rites to them peculiar,  
That the bard would strive to sing;  
Sing in humble words and simple,  
To a harp uncouth and awkward,  
As befits the modest minstrel  
Of a lowly race of men.  
Lowly, yea ! but lowly only  
As retired from observation—  
As without the pale of notice  
Of the nations of the world;  
For within his own dominion,  
The Cacique and his subjects  
Are as dignified and haughty,  
As the proudest of mankind.  
In their veins no mixed blood courseth,  
In their land no stranger dwelleth,  
For this simple child of nature  
Guards his country with his life;  
Guards his race from all admixture,  
Guards his ancient superstitions,  
His religion and his customs,  
Zealously and jealously;  
For a solemn oath doth bind him—  
Sworn above his father's body—  
To kill wife and son and daughter  
Should an enemy approach  
To obtain his fair possessions,  
Or to other laws subdue him,  
Ere he marches to the battle  
That may end but with his life.

Every hamlet hath its chieftain,  
Subject still to the Cacique,—  
The Cacique of Sasardi,—  
Who is ruler over all.  
Every village hath its Mila,  
Arzogueté and Tulete—  
(Priest and teacher and physician,  
Councilors and wisest men.)  
Primitive is their religion;  
Little know they of the God-head  
Whom the Israelites discovered  
And the Gentiles have improved.  
No need here for costly churches;  
Each rude hut is sanctuary,  
From whence, dying, to the bosom  
Of Eternal Rest they go.  
And to show the Mighty Spirit  
How on earth they toiled and labored,  
The canoe and the machete,  
And the arrows near them lie.  
Each home hath its cemetery  
Built within a palm enclosure,  
Where the dead swing in their hammocks  
Hid forever from the view.  
Seldom dream the San Blas Indians,  
Seldom loose their mental balance,  
For an ancient superstition  
Holds all such condemned to death.  
'Tis a sign that evil spirits  
Seek to cast their lot among them,  
From their old beliefs to win them  
Unto those they know not of.

Let us leave these sad statistics !  
Let us visit the fiestas !  
Three days since unto an ohme  
A punagua child was born ;  
And with shouts of great rejoicing,  
And libations of the chicha,  
They will pierce the tiny nostril,  
For the hoop of yellow gold.  
Haste we quickly to another—  
To a festival more joyful—  
For in turn the shy punagua  
Hath an ohme now become.  
Oh, the drinking ! the dancing,  
As they cut the maiden's tresses—  
In her father's house immure her  
Till her husband shall be found.  
Now bring forth the long cachimba,  
Bring the ina, bring the guarra,  
Bring the men and bring the women,  
The nutschuqua claims his bride !  
Long the parents pondered o'er it,  
That among the young men waiting  
They might choose the one most fitting  
For their daughter and themselves.  
Who could choose they but Machua ?  
Who like him to snare the tortoise,  
Who like him to drive the ulo  
Through the breakers of the coast ?  
On the voyage to Portobelo,  
Though with cocoanuts deep-laden,  
His canoe is always, always leading,  
Always first to gain the port.

Six days will he bravely labor,  
Six days toil to build the ulo  
That the law from him demandeth,  
Ere he once may see his bride.  
Sweet Punagua, none may see her ;  
For, until the boat is builded,  
In the pit the maid is hidden  
From the sight of every one.  
From her father's house they brought her,  
In the early morning darkness ;  
Now about her all the village  
In a circle gathered round,  
Sit and smoke the wedding guarra,  
Sit and drink the wedding chicha,  
Stories tell of other weddings  
And traditions old recite.  
Six days will they all be merry,  
Six days, till, his labor finished,  
With rejoicing comes Machua,  
Comes to claim his promised wife.  
To her father's house he bears her,  
There to serve the daughter's parents  
Till to them is born a daughter  
And their freedom thus is gained.  
Then upon the sylvan hill-side,  
Or within the lovely valley,  
Or upon the beach of coral,  
They will build their palm-thatched home ;  
And in turn will rear their children  
In the ancient superstitions,  
And to all the tribe be useful  
In the common industries.

## THE LAND OF THE CACIQUE.

Let them live in their seclusion,  
Let them keep their fair possessions,  
Let them rule themselves unaided,  
Grasping Nations of the earth !  
Let them practice their religion  
And observe their rites and customs,  
O ye pushing missionaries  
Of accepted creed and sect !  
Trouble not this gentle people—  
Leave them in their peace and quiet-  
Nor disturb this tropic Eden  
Of the Red Men of San Blas !

## ***BEYOND THE CHAGRES.***

**Beyond the Chagres River  
Are paths that lead to death ;  
To the fever's deadly breezes,  
To malaria's poisonous breath !  
Beyond the tropic foliage  
Where the alligator waits,  
Is the palace of the Devil—  
His original estates !**

**Beyond the Chagres River,  
Are paths fore'er unknown ;  
With a spider 'neath each pebble,  
A scorpion 'neath each stone !  
'Tis here the boa-constrictor  
His fatal banquet holds,  
And to his slimy bosom  
His hapless victim folds.**

## BEYOND THE CHAGRES.

Beyond the Chagres River  
Lurks the panther in his lair,  
And ten hundred thousand dangers  
Are in the noxious air !  
Behind the trembling leaflets,  
Beneath the fallen reeds,  
Are ever-present perils  
Of a million different breeds.

Beyond the Chagres River,  
'Tis said—the story's old—  
Are paths that lead to mountains  
Of purest, virgin gold ;  
But 'tis my firm conviction—  
Whatever tales they tell—  
That beyond the Chagres River,  
All paths lead straight to Hell !



## *THE SEA-GRAPE TREE.\**

Long, long ago, in the faded past,  
A breeze from the indigo hills—  
Where every morn the sun is born  
'Mid fair Santa Rita's rills—

With its redolent breath a seedling blew  
Across the arm of the sea,  
And on the shore where the breakers roar  
It planted the Sea-grape Tree.

And old Mother Carib nursed it long,  
And chanted it lullabies,  
And over each leaf, from out on the reef,  
She watched with vigilant eyes.

And the rain and the mist and gentle dew,  
Brought strength to its lengthening roots ;  
And the sun with his light and the moon with her night,  
Both nourished its tender shoots.

\*[One of the celebrated old landmarks of Colon.]

## THE SEA-GRAPE TREE.

And so the tree grew to a wondrous size,  
And in wondrous shape as well ;  
Yet weird tho' its look, there never was book  
That could weirder stories tell !

For within the memory of man 'tis known  
That under its spreading shade,  
Full many a one, his travail done,  
His bed of death hath made.

And below its branches men have sat  
And plotted a Nation's wrong ;  
While lovers have met, as they meet there yet,  
To murmur their world-sweet song.

And many a fateful duel there  
Have life-long comrades fought ;  
And near to its seat have children's feet  
For the branching coral sought.

Around its trunk the mummers have danced  
To the merry castanet,  
And beneath its boughs the gay carouse  
And funeral train have met !

Yet all undisturbed by Nature's hand,  
On the shores of the changeful sea,  
Oblivious still to the good and the ill,  
There standeth the Sea-grape Tree !

## *A FRIJOLES WASHER-GIRL.*

A dream in living bronze is she,  
A dusky goddess full-revealed ;  
Clad but in nature's modesty—  
Her wondrous beauty unconcealed.

Half to her knee, the rushing stream  
An instant pauses on its way;  
The ripples in the sunshine gleam  
And tiny rainbows 'round her play.

Lithe as the bamboo growing near,  
Within the tangled, tropic glade ;  
As graceful as the startled deer,  
Half hidden in the distant shade.

The limbs, the hips, the swelling bust  
Of famed Olympus' fairest queen ;  
Ne'er modeled yet on lines more just,  
Was ever sculptured marble seen !

Her curl-fringed eyes, now black, now brown,  
Are depths of passion unexplored ;  
Her teeth, a glistening, pearly crown  
A Rajah would delight to hoard !

A dream, a dream in bronze is she,  
A dusky goddess full-revealed !  
Clad but in nature's modesty—  
Her wondrous beauty unconcealed !

## ***THE ISTHMIAN WAY.***

To bow and scrape and shake your hand,  
To greet you with a smile so bland,  
That you will think no other friend  
Can toward you half the good intend ;  
But still to cherish in one's heart  
Enough rank hate to fill a cart !

**This is the Isthmian way !**

To buy for gold and silver pay ;  
To answer Yea while thinking Nay ;  
To borrow someone's little wealth  
And leave the country for your health !  
To plot and scheme and slyly seek  
To make some decent man a sneak !

**This is the Isthmian way !**

To kiss the man who wins success  
And kick the man whose luck is less ;  
To make of vice, beatitude !  
And virtue of ingratitude !  
Accept all favors—but omit  
To e'er return the benefit !

**This is the Isthmian way !**

## THE ISTHMIAN WAY.

To curry favor with the great  
And pander to one's meanest trait ;  
To smash the decalogue to bits  
But give your neighbor's weakness fits !  
Oppress the weak—uphold the strong—  
In short, do everything that's wrong !  
This is the Isthmian way !

To wage a miasmatic strife  
And suffer all the ills of life ;  
To eat and drink yourself to death,  
And curse God with your latest breath ;  
And then, a " heavenly mansion " fill,  
Prepared for you on Monkey Hill !  
This is the Isthmian way !

God grant that happ'ly some of us  
Escape the general animus ;  
And travel, tho' but falt'ringly,  
The nobler path of charity ;  
Tho' stumbling often, still to find  
More upright records left behind,  
Than by the Isthmian way !

## *JOHN ASPINWALL.*

A quaint old moke is John Aspinwall,  
Who lives by the dead-house gate ;  
And quaint are his thoughts—if thoughts at all  
Ever lurk in his woolly pate !  
For he's old as the hills, is this old black man—  
Thrice doubled with age is he ;  
And the days when his wand'rings first began  
Are shrouded in mystery.

Perhaps he was living when Morgan's crew,  
Came lusting for Spanish gold,  
And drenched the Isthmus with bloody dew,  
In the brave, bold days of old ;  
Perhaps he was here when the pioneers  
Of the time almost forgot,  
Made a trail o'er the land with their bitter tears  
And the bones they left to rot !

Perhaps he was here when old Chauncey came,  
And Stephens and all the rest,  
To build thro' the swamps their pathway of fame  
From Chagres to Ancon's crest.  
And many's the night he has lain, no doubt,  
By the side of some comrade ill,  
Whose corpse, in the morn, he has carried out  
To its rest on Monkey Hill !

For years upon years he has watched the tide  
Of adventurers ebb and flow—  
Success and improvidence, side by side,  
Seen ceaselessly come and go !  
He has seen the gamut of passion run,  
Oh, thousands and thousands of times;  
And witnessed the brightest, purest sun,  
Uncover the darkest of crimes !

But never a word will he answer me,  
Whenever he passes by,  
'Though often a curious light I see  
In his fathomless coal-black eye !  
For a quaint old moke is John Aspinwall,  
Who lives by the dead-house gate;  
And quaint are his thoughts—if thoughts at all  
Ever lurk in his woolly pate !

## *A PANAMA LULLABY.*

Lullaby, lullaby, child of the morning,  
List to the matin-bells hailing the day ;  
See the sun blithely the cloudlets adorning,  
Ere beginning his journey from far down the bay.  
Lovingly, tenderly, each cloud caressing  
With glances of love-light and fingers of gold ;  
For each one doth hold for my darling a blessing  
That each hour of the day shall gently unfold.

Lullaby, lullaby, child of the even,  
List to the vesper-bells closing the day ;  
See the moon marshal the star-hosts of heaven,  
Ere beginning her journey from far down the bay.  
Lovingly, tenderly, each star caressing  
With glances of love-light and fingers of gold ;  
For each one doth hold for my darling a blessing,  
That each hour of the night shall gently unfold.

Oh, child of the dawning, child of the gloaming,  
Light of my spirit and pride of my heart ;  
Down into dream-land go fearlessly roaming ;  
Thy head from my bosom shall ne'er be apart.  
By day and by night will I guard thee securely—  
Thy life is *my* life, my glorious boy !  
In my arms slumbering—guilelessly, purely,  
Thou 'rt God's choicest gift and man's greatest joy !



# ***THE SONG OF THE MISANTHROPE.***

Oh, I'm a sullen misanthrope,  
A hater of my kind ;  
Man's faults as thro' a microscope  
Wax large within my mind.  
Each sin that others trifling think,  
To me is great indeed,  
And crimes from which most people shrink  
My taste for misery feed !

In every eye I plainly see  
The evil lurking there ;  
Beneath each gentle voice, to me  
Appears a guileful snare.  
In hand-clasps, smooth hypocrisy  
I always can detect,  
And e'en a hat doff'd courteously,  
But envy doth reflect !

## THE SONG OF THE MISANTHROPE.

All tenderness is selfishness

That veils some low desire,

And purity to me is less

Than vileness in the mire !

And lofty thoughts—He ! he !—Ho ! ho !

What sport they give to me !

Their sire is Vanity, I know !

Still lives the Pharisee !

Each weakness human nature shows,

Is meat and drink for me,

And o'er man's many wrongs and woes

I laugh in hearty glee !

'Twas Malice who wrote Friendship's laws

With Spite, her sister elf !

I hate my fellow man because

I'm hateful to myself !

## *TO THE SOUTHERN CROSS.*

When evening drapes her filmy robe  
O'er distant hill and drooping palm,  
And, save soft echoes, naught disturbs  
The purple twilight's drowsy calm.

Soft echoes from the coral reef—  
The waves' low greeting to the stars,  
That, answering across the sea,  
Send fellowship on shining bars.

'Tis then, while earth is slumbering,  
Its woes forgot in restful dreams,  
That thou, Christ's love-test symboling,  
Shed'st o'er the blue, thy sacred beams.

'Tis then, by him who, listening, waits,  
The still, small voice is heard again  
In song—the sweetest ever sung—  
“ *Upon earth peace : good-will to men !* ”

## ***“CINCO CENTAVOS?”***

I wonder 'neath what sun  
His worthless life begun,  
And when he learned to say  
As I hear him every day :  
“Cinco Centavos?”

No one has ever heard  
Him say another word ;  
He may know more, 'tis true,  
But he'll only answer you :  
“Cinco Centavos?”

He's such a queer old boy,  
With his pants of corduroy  
And his faded velvet coat,  
As he says, as if by rote :  
“Cinco Centavos?”

His shirt is ancient, too,  
He wears one boot—one shoe—  
And he twirls a shabby cane  
While he chants the old refrain :  
“Cinco Centavos?”

**"CINCO CENTAVOS?"**

**His hair has not been cut  
Since he washed his face of smut  
Years ago, when he was neat  
And knew not to repeat :**

**"Cinco Centavos?"**

**Each day he tramps the town  
Tho' the rain is pouring down ;  
With the mud up to his knees,  
Greeting every one he sees :**

**"Cinco Centavos?"**

**He sleeps beneath the pier—  
If you listen you can hear  
The echoes grumbling deep,  
As he murmurs in his sleep ;**

**"Cinco Centavos?"**

**The fate in store for him,  
Must be a synonym  
Of the woful wretchedness  
His only words express :**

**"Cinco Centavos?"**

## SUNSET.

I sit on my lofty piazza,  
Overlooking the restless sea ;  
(And a spider glides over my forehead,  
A cockroach runs over my knee !)

The god of the day is preparing  
His bed for another night ;  
(But a swarm of pestiferous sand-flies  
Is obscuring the glorious sight !)

He's piling his cloud-blankets 'round him  
Of crimson embroidered with gold ;  
(That ant crawling under my collar,  
Down my spine sends a shiver of cold !)

He's nodding—but with eyes still half-open,  
Tips a distant sail with his fire ;  
(“ *Dios mio !* ” another mosquito  
Is twanging his discordant lyre !)

He's sleeping—the night lamps are twinkling  
All around his limitless bed ;  
(And a bat darting hither and thither  
Has just missed hitting my head !)

Farewell 'till to-morrow, old fellow !  
Thou warmest, most tropical friend !  
(A centipede's slowly approaching—  
'Tis time for my rev'rie to end !)

## *THE MINORITY.*

Whence do they come, they of the lofty bearing,  
Whose manners voice an elevated life ?  
Whose faces, smiles of triumph wearing,  
Tell us of strife

And victory won, o'er weaknesses of nature  
And petty sinfulness ? In what grave tone,  
In what phraseology and nomenclature  
To us unknown,

Do they commune together o'er the tale  
Of how we strive to reach them but to fail !

We may not say ! Perchance they are descended  
In line unbroken, from the Pharisee  
Who once, within the gates, his knee unbended,  
Thanked God that he

Was not as other men !—We must not murmur,  
Oh, mourning brother of the frail estate !  
Our steps will aye be weak, theirs aye the firmer !  
We may be late

Yet haply still, each much repented fall  
Shall aid us answer His last muster call !

## CHARITY.

To brag or boast of one's own deeds  
Is nature's mild insanity—  
    The pabulum, on which one feeds  
    The craving, ever-pressing needs  
Of this weakness of humanity !

And I would aid to place a ban  
Upon all thoughts satirical ;  
    For I believe that ev'ry man  
    Is, in his heart, a charlatan  
And, more or less, empirical !

Then why pose as exceptional,  
Or claim superiorities,  
    When, at thy soul's confessional,  
    Thou hast, perforce, to mention all  
Thy own inferiorities !

Come ! let us strive to be so great  
As to deny disparity,  
    Between the faults with all innate  
    And *ours*, that are commensurate !  
Thus practicing true charity !



## ***KING FEVER.***

**He's Ruler of Rulers o'er all the earth,**

**King Fever is his name !**

**From the Monarch grown grey to the Prince at his birth ;**

**King Fever is his name !**

**Before him, Emperor, Sultan and Czar,**

**President, Pontiff, Mikado and Shah,**

**Caliph and Mandarin—powerless are !**

**King Fever is his name !**

**All, all must approach him with sceptreless hands,**

**King Fever is his name !**

**For his are their subjects, their crowns and their lands,**

**King Fever is his name !**

**His are their diadems, jewels and wealth ;**

**Nought can they hide from him, sly tho' their stealth !**

**Heirs or inheritance—beauty or health !**

**King Fever is his name !**

**Then hail ! All hail ! to the great Socialist !**

**King Fever is his name !**

**Whose levelling power none can resist !**

**King Fever is his name !**

**Whose might can demolish the whole Chinese Wall,**

**Around our poor craniums build it all—**

**Whose flames burn alike the great and the small !**

**King Fever is his name !**

## *FOR EVELYN.*

For Evelyn, the god of day  
Beams o'er the hills in bright array ;  
He smiles, and lags upon his way;  
He weeps when dusk concludes his stay  
With Evelyn !

For Evelyn, the moon doth haste  
To glorify the darkening waste ;  
She smiles to see herself out-graced;  
She weeps to know herself less chaste  
Than Evelyn !

For Evelyn, the stars bedight  
The purple garment of the night ;  
They smile that she may have delight;  
They weep to find the eyes more bright,  
Of Evelyn !

For Evelyn, stars, moon and sun  
Shall smile and weep till time is done ;  
And I, when all life's sands are run,  
Shall feel my love but just begun  
For Evelyn !

## *THE SONG OF THE MOSQUITO.*

In Hades' blackest corner,  
A murky river flows ;  
No imp knows whence it cometh—  
No devil where it goes !  
'Twas in its noisome vapor  
That Satan watched my birth,  
And just from simple kindness  
I winged my way to earth !

I'm a very small mosquito—  
In Aspinwall I dwell ;  
By days I'm inoffensive,  
But nights I'm merry—well,  
I tune my tiny fiddle,  
I sound my tiny gong  
And make folks' lives a burden,  
With the burden of my song !

My touch is light and downy—  
They know not I am there,  
Till, zim !—what howls and curses !  
'Tis laughable, I swear !  
I draw my little dagger,  
I cock my little eye,  
And make the meekest Christian  
Hate God, and wish to die !

## *IN MEMORIAM.*

He's dead ! he's dead ! poor Jack is dead,  
And gone to the monkey heaven ;  
He was very young when he was born,  
And he died at the age of seven.

I state this age for the sake of rhyme,  
So, wise ones, do not laugh ;  
For truth is often sacrificed  
To write an epitaph !

He lived a strictly moral life,  
Tho' at heart a sybarite ;  
His mind a mine of wisdom was,  
And nature his delight.

Though *all* the sciences he loved,  
First came anatomy ;  
And that is how he grew to be  
An expert at phlebotomy !

He passed his life examining  
All the insects he could get ;  
And all life's secrets were to him  
An open book, you bet !

And, thoughtless stranger, if you knew  
The things he must have known,  
We'd have to move to another world  
For you'd claim this as your own !

So, dear old Jack, pray think of us,  
As you eat your peas and rice,  
And swing, contented, by your tail,  
On the trees of paradise !

# ***THE FUNERAL TRAIN.***

**A COLON VIGNETTE OF 1885-86.**

**Thrust her in the dead-car box !  
Jump aboard—let's have a ride !  
Ring the harsh-voiced engine bell !  
Death has claimed another bride !  
Pass the gin to every one—  
Pull the throttle open wide !**

***" Pobre de solemnidad ! "***

**Now we start ! we round the curve !  
Down the busy street we go !  
Hi ! See there's the circus tent,  
And to-night we'll see the show !  
Through the windows put your heads :  
Wave your hats to all you know !**

***" Pobre de solemnidad ! "***

## THE FUNERAL TRAIN.

Here Fox River is at last—  
See those men and women fight !  
Sal, old girl, give me a smoke—  
Bless my skin, that sun is bright !  
Here we are at Monkey Hill ;  
Lend a hand—the corpse is light !

*“ Pobre de solemnidad ! ”*

Up the grass-grown path we climb,  
“ Billy Black, you’re drunk I swear ! ”  
“ And so are you ! ” “ And you ! ” “ And you ! ”  
“ And so am I, I do declare ! ”  
“ Now you’ve dropped her ! ” “ Pick her up ! ”  
“ Leave the lid—we’re almost there ! ”

*“ Pobre de solemnidad ! ”*

Dump her in the common grave !  
Aren’t those lilies mighty sweet ?—  
In she goes ! Now heap the earth—  
Never mind to be so neat !  
There’s no need to make it deep,  
No frost here to nip her feet !

*“ Pobre de solemnidad ! ”*

## *A NEW YEAR'S RAINBOW.*

It rose this morning out of the sea,  
Just as the sun was peeping  
With glances bright at the distant night  
That still in the West lay sleeping ;  
The rain that in the somber dawn  
Like tears from the clouds was falling,  
Had passed away while the god of day  
The darkness was inthralling.

And it said, "faint heart, take cheer ! take cheer !  
And behold the sign and token  
I bring to thee from over the sea,  
Of the promise never broken !  
The grief I follow shall ne'er return,  
Oh, list to my joyous message !—  
Dost thou not know that my gleaming bow  
Of a glad New Year is presage ?"

## *THE TRADE-WIND.*

Blow ! Thou brave old Trade-wind, blow !  
Send the mighty billows flashing  
In the radiant sunlight dashing  
O'er the reef like thunder crashing !  
Blow ! Thou brave old Trade-wind, blow !

Blow ! Thou grand old Trade-wind, blow !  
Oh, for caves in which to store thee !  
See the palm trees bow before thee !  
Ay ! like them we do adore thee !  
Blow ! Thou grand old Trade-wind, blow !

Blow ! Thou kind old Trade-wind, blow !  
Blow ! Oh, blow with fierce endeavor !  
Blow the fever far, forever !  
Let the mists return, Oh, never !  
Blow ! Thou kind old Trade-wind, blow !

Blow ! Thou good old Trade-wind, blow !  
Blow away our tropic madness !  
Blow away our untold sadness !  
Blow us lasting peace and gladness !  
Blow ! Thou good old Trade-wind, blow !



**“ TO BLAME ? ”**

**He was to blame, you say, sir ?**

**Now just look here, my friend,  
Don't you think your criticisms  
The ears of Christ offend ?  
'Twas he that said once, “ Judge not ! ”  
And he alone can tell,  
Whose “ negligence ” occasioned  
The loss of the *Moselle*.**

**“ Neglect ? ” O yes, 'tis easy  
For lubbers just like you,  
To spin out yarns by fathoms  
For fools to think 'em true !  
Who taught *you* navigation—  
How long have you been to sea ?  
You don't know port from starboard,  
Or weather side from lee !**

**The facts are these : Our captain  
Was new upon this coast,  
But a better man nor braver,  
The whole line couldn't boast !  
He knew his business, too, sir,  
As well as it could be known ;  
But he couldn't run the currents  
Or storms of the torrid zone !**

"TO BLAME?"

The course he set's been sailed on,  
For more than a hundred trips,  
By a hundred different captains  
Who haven't lost their ships!  
*Who* sent the gale that blew us  
With lightning speed ahead?  
Who sent the sea like mountains,  
And the darkness of the dead?

I'll bet my next month's earnings  
You've lost *your* way on shore!  
At sea, and in a tempest,  
Is a blooming different score!  
How's man to sight his headlands  
When God obstructs the view?  
I'd like to have an answer—  
Who'll tell me, sir?—can *you*?

He's dead!—a hero, too, sir,  
If ever there was one;  
He died to do his duty—  
What more could he have done?  
"To blame?" He paid the forfeit!  
And Jesus always lets  
The punishment fall lightly,  
On a man who pays his debts!

## ***THE SAND-FLY.***

Oh, Lord ! Oh, Nature ! Oh, whatever be  
The Power properly addressed !

I pray thee humbly—pray on bended knee—  
Grant this last plea ; deny the rest !

'Tis little that I ask from out the store  
Of blessings in thy right to give ;  
And, surely, thou dost daily waste much more  
On folks less fit than I to live !

I crave but this : that from the diff'rent kinds  
Of insects cursing night and day !  
(The entomologist claims that he finds  
Five hundred thousand, so they say !)

Thou wilt at once destroy, annihilate—  
Permit no longer to exist !  
Efface, cut off, rub out, obliterate  
The pesky sand-fly from the list !

## *TO JULIET.*

Lady with the hazel eyes,  
    Nut brown hair and form of grace ;  
Teeth that glisten in the smile  
    That illumes thy lovely face ;  
Feet that twinkle in the dance,  
    Hands so soft and white and small ;  
Charms so varied that no pen,  
    May do justice to them all ;  
Tell me, fair one, wilt thou not  
    Grant this fervent wish of mine !  
Fill my soul with ecstasy !  
    Take me for thy Valentine !

## *HE'LL NEVER DIE.*

On gloomy Styx's bank I stand,  
    Great crowds are passing over,  
And patiently I watch and wait  
    One party to discover.

The ferry daily busier grows—  
    Old Charon shakes with laughter—  
Yet vainly do I seek the face  
    Of the man whose luck I'm after !

## *NOTHIN' TO TALK ABOUT.*

The' jest haint nothin' a-goin' on !  
Dullest town that ever I see !  
No breeze blowin'—"drizzle" a-fallin'—  
Everythin's flat as flat can be !  
Even the sea's as still as death—  
Dogged if a twig moves on a tree !  
We 'aint got nothin' to talk about !

No Canal rumors fillin' the air !  
'Road's sayin' nothin'—jest sawin' wood !  
Steamship Companies quiet's a lamb—  
A revolution'd be all-fired good !  
No row flourishin' 'tween the press,  
All th' old diff'rences understood !  
We 'aint got nothin' to talk about !

No fresh scandal's a-floatin' 'round,  
Old ones picked right down to th' bone !  
No scrappin' matches—no "tidal wave"—  
Seems like everyone's goin' it alone !  
*Do* somethin' somebody ! Turn yourself loose !  
Sh'd think you'd be sick o' hearin' us groan :  
"We 'aint got nothin' to talk about !"

*TO JOHN PAYNE.*

To dream with thee in fair Armida's garden—  
Thou sweetest dreamer of the dream song land—  
I entreat thy kind compliance ;  
I would crave with thee alliance,  
Across the seas, that thou would'st clasp my hand !  
  
Nor deem my hope but too audacious folly—  
'Tis most sincere, this humble pray'r of mine !  
For tho' the world is ringing  
With the sound of poets singing,  
There is no voice that thrills me as does thine !  
  
So then, oh thou most gracious tender master !  
I ask to follow on thine upward way ;  
I would suffer all thy sadness,  
Would be glad with all thy gladness,  
And, with thee, learn to dream and sing and pray !

## *MEMORY.*

**"There is no progress in the life which feeds on memory, only stagnation and death."—ELEMENTS OF THEOSOPHY.**

On Memory's progressless sea,  
Then let me, stagnant, lie  
And rot, with my remembrances,  
Until I, stagnant, die !

No gospel preach to me, I pray,  
That robs me of the bliss—  
Still lingering upon my lips—  
Of a sainted mother's kiss !

That teaches that the childish prayer  
I prattled at her knee,  
Was silly nonsense, and unfit  
To be recalled by me !

That teaches that a father's care,  
The precepts that it taught,  
Are wisdomless—devoid of truth—  
And hence become as naught !

## MEMORY.

That sees in youth and love's first dream,  
No lessons that the mind  
On "Karma" set—on "Progress" bent—  
Some benefit may find !

That would ignore the consciousness  
Of life's maturer sins ;  
That teaches that with every day  
Another life begins !

That dulls the blush, that blunts the sting  
Of an unworthy deed ;—  
That teaches that of Memory's whip  
No mortal hath a need !

Ah, no ! I'll suffer for my faults  
Each livelong night and day,  
And in good acts small comfort find,  
In the old, old-fashioned way !

So then, on Memory's changeless sea  
Pray let me, stagnant, lie  
And rot, with my remembrances,  
Until I, stagnant, die !



## *HYMN TO COLUMBUS.*

Let us now praise the Great Discoverer's name ;  
With peans loud and long let us rejoice !  
To celebrate Columbus and his fame,  
Let us unite with heart and soul and voice.  
Oh Mighty Man, who added world to world !  
Rejoice, ye world ! Rejoice !

We hail thee, Great Columbus, wondrous man !  
The benefactor of our glorious race !  
When thou, the labor of thy life began,  
The selfish world upon thee turned its face !  
But thine, to-day, the hero's laurel crown—  
The adoration of each patriot mind !  
From Fame's most dazzling heights thou lookest down  
Upon the world thou gavest to mankind !

And joy beholdest thou on every hand ;  
In peaceful emulation Nations vie  
With Nations of each diff'rent clime and land,  
To raise the noblest monument on high !  
Though ages roll into eternity,  
Still man shall to thee mighty works design ;  
Thy name immortal shall forever be !  
The world's unending gratitude is thine !

## *THE EPITAPH.*

Here lies,—although he told the truth,  
Or so to do did always try,—  
A hybrid—neither man nor youth !  
I pray thee, stranger, let him lie !

His failings his, and his alone,  
Tho' possibly inherited ;  
He only wished upon the stone  
Above his bones, to have it said :

He sought with zeal the narrow way  
Of virtue and sobriety ;  
He found it—but the self-same day  
Grew tired of the society !

So chose he then—in pride bedeck'd,  
To build a pathway of his own ;  
He failed—he was no architect !  
His sins were his, let him atone !

HOURS WITH AN OLD-TIMER

The Author has endeavored in these reminiscences of many of his friends, to put into tangible shape a few of the stories of past days that his old *compadres* have, at different times, related to him. Admitting their bases as facts, he confesses to the embellishments.

## GEORGE B , AND HIS COFFIN.

"Did you ever hear of George B , and his coffin?" asked the Old-timer.

The hour had been full of reminiscences, as usual. It was one of those peculiar days when the very sunlight seems to burnish the memory; when every breeze seems weighted with a recollection, and the long, stately sweep of the palm branches seems to brush away the cobwebs of forgetfulness; when one even remarks the sonorous monotone of the old Caribbean, long since become so familiar a sound that it is accepted as a matter of course, and rarely noticed. A few moments previously we had been talking about our old "G. S." and his wonderful fight with our the hereditary "Yellow John." For six days Col. T. had held his own against fearful odds, and finally, on the ———, however, as our East Indian contemporary has it, this is another story entirely.

"Well, if you never did, or if, on this glorious day—one of God's own, by the way—you fail to recall it, here it is.

"Old George, who came to the Isthmus early in the 'sixties,' was from the very first one of the most popular of the 'boys.' I vividly remember him, as he appeared the day of his arrival. He was a perfect picture of New England ruggedness—of manly beauty. With a face naturally pale, relieved, however, by the peach-blow tint upon his cheeks that is so frequently the distinctive imprint of Puritan ancestry; coal black eyes and hair, and teeth of dazzling whiteness, no one who had seen him since then would have recognized him as he looked when he left us after twenty or more years' residence here.

"Long days and hard nights had done their work. His complexion had lost every vestige of its fairness, and become so deeply sallow that it was difficult for a stranger to believe that he was a white man. His eyes were faded and lustreless, and his form was bent and somewhat emaciated. Still, though he had stood much, very much, I thought him capable of standing many more years of it all than he did. He died, poor fellow, after a few months' residence in the harsh climate of the North.

"Like the rest of us, George had his struggles with the fever. Many and many a time he was 'knocked over' for a day or so, only to show up again as cheerful and smiling as though he had just returned from a picnic at Kenny's Bluff. Oh, I tell you, my young friend, we were tough in those days—*mighty* tough! and old George was as tough as any of us, if not tougher!

"Well, 'leaves have their time to fall,' you know, and *his* time came at last. That is, the doctor thought so and *all* of us thought so—George might have thought differently, though, and he always swore that he did. It was the August of '84, I think, that so many of us were down—some of us, alas! never to rise again. Many were the trips to the 'Hill' that month! George was a perfect treasure in a sick room. Always cheerful, ever ready and willing, and above all, a capital nurse; more than one of the 'boys' lived through that dreary month to bless his unselfish comradeship.

"His turn finally came, however, as I said before, and after one particular night, half of which he had spent at the bedside of a fever-stricken friend, and half at the green-covered table of an enemy, he threw himself upon his bed—caught at last!

"The news spread rapidly—do you know, I think that news spreads more rapidly here than in any other place in the world, especially *bad* news!—and in a few hours we were all speculating on the old boy's chances. That cold-blooded wretch, 'Rocky' Smith, bet Jerry Ryan fifty to thirty that George wouldn't last four days. He was 'banking' on the well-known habits of the sick man, you see. Late hours and long rum are not the best of backing in a fight with the *Amarillo*, you know.

"Poor George! How he suffered! I have seen quite a number of battles-royal with the fever fiend, and been through one or two myself, but I must say that I never witnessed a fiercer. It was all of little use, however. He grew weaker and weaker until the third day had passed away. About an hour after sundown the doctor left the house, saying that it was all up with poor B——, and 'Rocky' Smith immediately rushed down town to collect his bet.

"One of the boys went over to the shops and ordered the very best coffin in stock, to be delivered at George's quarters the next morning at seven o'clock, sharp. You know that this climate necessitates prompt action in such cases. We left the nurse and a colored man to assist her to prepare the body for burial, and went to the mess-table, wearing considerably

longer faces than usual. After dinner some went down town for the regular beer and billiards, as much from a desire to get rid of their thoughts as from long-established habit. I sat out on the long balcony and smoked a fearfully long and lonely hour into eternity, and then went to bed and passed the night with the help of mosquitoes and bad dreams.

"The next day was Sunday, and it was after nine o'clock when I sat down to my coffee. The first man to sit down at the table with me was 'Rocky' Smith. He was a solemn-looking fellow at all times, but this particular morning he looked as though life never *had* had, and never *would* have, any delight for him. 'Ah,' thought I, 'you are impressed at last!'

" 'What hour is the funeral?' I asked.

" 'Funeral be d—d! Where have you been all day that you haven't heard the news? Don't you know that the blamed fool didn't die after all? Did you ever hear of such a beastly streak of bad luck as I have struck lately? I went down and collected my thirty dollars from Jerry and then 'blew it all in' at Dewy's, and fifty more besides; and now, by thunder, I've got to put up another fifty! Say, Jack, lend me seventy-five or a hundred till pay-day, will you?'

"I swallowed my coffee as quickly as I could and hurried down to George's room. There he sat, bolstered up in bed with all the pillows in the house at his back, sipping Mumm from a bell-mouthed glass and looking almost as well as ever. The shop people had evidently filled their order promptly, for there in the corner of the room stood the coffin—the most grewsomely out-of-place piece of furniture that I ever saw in my life, before or since?

"Champagne, good nursing and a strong will had saved another life. After we had left, the evening before, the old nurse had begun her treatment, and there lay the result—with a smile of welcome upon his face!

"Now comes the curious part of the story. The shop people refused to take back the coffin and old George had to pay them thirty dollars for it; he kept it in his rooms for about a month and then sold it to the Consul for fifty. Would you like to know whose estate paid the money? 'Rocky' Smith's!"

## *"SITTING UP" WITH A CORPSE.*

Still harping upon prehistoric times, or what he is sometimes pleased to call the "tough" period of the Isthmus, the Old-timer related the following to illustrate, or accentuate, a statement that he had just made. Before I repeat the anecdote, however, I wish to say that during all of our intercourse I have never heard him speak slightly or unkindly of any of those who have played their parts upon the stage of his experience. On the contrary, he always speaks of their various and many foibles, shortcomings and vices as though time, while not converting them into virtues, had, in a measure, mellowed and hallowed them. Underlying each and all of our many hearty laughs, there is ever a tender and loyal feeling of fellowship which, though seldom expressed, is always betrayed by a sigh or a seemingly trivial remark. The recklessness of those days is still present in these, though it is, thank God, neither so desperate or so noticeable. Long residence in so equithermal a climate as ours rarely fails to weaken the strongest moral as well as physical constitution, and he is the veriest Pecksniff who, after an analysis of his own heart, finds nothing therein to criticise. Such an one should be gently etherized into a better and purer world—he is of no practical use in this. Deny it as we may, we are all "palate-tickled" with the spice of wickedness, though we may seldom drink the forbidden draught containing it.

"I was living, then, at the old Howard House," said the Old-timer. "Whenever I think of that hotel there comes a rush of memories upon me that is almost overwhelming. It was from this famous hostelry that old J. used to send his celebrated messages to Panama announcing the fact that 'another tidal wave of intemperance was sweeping over Colon,' a circumstance which was duly chronicled in the local organs. J. was, perhaps, the most unique character that I have ever met, and his queer



sayings and doings would fill a large volume. You shall have them all, some day, never fear; now the hour is waning, and besides, I want to tell you of the time I 'sat up' with poor McKay's corpse.

"McKay was a foreman wharf-builder, and one of the best men at his trade, and personally as well, that we had here in those days. He was very quiet, and very temperate, as compared with the rest of us, and his obliging disposition had made him many friends. He was engaged in superintending some extensive repairs to one of the wharves when he contracted the fever that ended in his death.

"A short time before this happened a certain Rev. Mr. Laytor had arrived and taken charge of one of the missions then just beginning their work on the Isthmus. He was a very dignified gentleman and a great temperance advocate, while his horror for a pack of cards was edifying to behold. Games of all kinds filled him with abhorrence—those of chance being his especial aversion. As there were none of any more innocent character flourishing among us than 'High-man-out' for cocktails, you can easily imagine his consternation at what follows.

"McKay died about four o'clock in the afternoon, and was prepared for his endless residence on the 'Hill' at once. It being so late, however, the funeral could not take place until the morning, and two of the 'boys' having volunteered to stay with his body until midnight, Mr. Laytor and myself agreed to perform that duty from that hour till morning.

"At about half-past eleven Mr. Laytor came to my room and awoke me, and together we proceeded through the mud and rain to poor Mac's room, some distance down the street.

"Among the most sincere of Mac's mourners was old Tom Flynn, his principal assistant. Tom's grief was heart-felt, for he had been befriended in a thousand ways by his dead superior, who, among many other things, had procured his reinstatement at the time he had been discharged for indulging in a 'spree' of three weeks' duration, the closing act of which had been the smashing of all the windows in one of the Company's buildings with a slung-shot, a weapon he was addicted to both carrying and using, generally upon the heads of the colored contingent, when in his cups.

"I saw Flynn, about two hours after Mac's death, in the Howard House bar-room, and immediately noticed that his grief had developed into intoxication. He had all of an Irish man's capacity for stimulants, but it was evident that even *that* was nearly, if not quite fully, occupied.

I passed through the crowd without being observed, and thought no more of the circumstance.

"Well, Mr. Laytor and I finally reached the house of mourning and started upstairs to assume our sad duty. Before we reached the front room which had formerly been poor Mac's home, I thought I heard sounds that were perhaps familiar enough to me, but that were surely unexpected at that time and place. I knocked once or twice at the door, but heard nothing except the sounds before mentioned—by this time become wofully distinct—and finally entered, closely followed by the minister.

"When I tell you that I, hardened as I had become to scenes of the description, was really shocked, you can appreciate the sentiments of the reverend gentleman. There sat the two 'gentlemen' who had, as I supposed, volunteered to 'sit up' until twelve o'clock, with two others whom they had evidently invited to bear them company, entirely absorbed in a game of 'draw!' Judging from the collection of bottles that loomed up through the tobacco smoke from a side table that stood within reaching distance, and the row of empty glasses standing in front of them, other things had been engaging their attention also.

"There was a moment or so of the chilliest silence I have ever experienced—during which I did not dare look at the minister—and then one of the party arose, and, swaying gently from side to side, said, 'Good even-hic-ing, genlmn! Zhe corpse hic-zon the balcon-hic-ny!' and sank, or rather fell, back into his chair.

"Without stopping a moment—in fact I did not dare to, I felt such a disgraceful inclination to yell with laughter—I led the way to the balcony with Mr. Laytor, whose labored breathing apprised me of his outraged feelings, close by my side. It was quite dark out there, there being no light save that supplied by a solitary candle stuck in the mouth of an old 'square-face' bottle. This I took, and, to cover my embarrassment, asked the parson if he would look at poor Mac.

"He murmured an assent, and we walked to the end of the balcony, where we could dimly see the body laid out on a board supported by four chairs. We bent reverently over it, and Mr. Laytor was in the act of kneeling at its side to pour out his suppressed feelings in prayer when our ears were startled—*startled?* that don't *half* express it!—with a prolonged and most awful *snore!*

"As soon as I could recover myself sufficiently to do so, I threw the

## **"SITTING UP" WITH A CORPSE.**

light upon the face of the object before us, and—what do you think?—there lay old Tom Flynn, hands crossed upon his breast, mouth wide open, and a block of ice beneath his head! Dead, did you say? Yes! *Dead drunk!*

"How the minister got out of the house, and what his feelings were, I never knew; could never muster sufficient courage to ask him. I went back into the room only to be greeted by shouts of laughter, in which, I must confess, I could not help joining, the whole affair was so irresistibly ludicrous. Have you never experienced that half insane, half idiotic and wholly unconquerable desire to laugh under the least appropriate circumstances, that constitutes what might be called manly hysterics?

"It seems that McKay's body had been placed in a back room, and those fellows knowing that I had promised to sit up with it during the latter part of the night, had taken old Flynn upstairs with them and plied him with liquor until he fell asleep, and then rigged him up in this way on the balcony, for my exclusive benefit. It is only just to say that they did not expect Mr. Laytor to accompany me, and that they were so astonished by his arrival—and possibly so elated by their potations, to use a very mild term, that they carried out the original programme in spite of the respect they all felt for him.

"The next morning the mission treasury was richer by forty dollars—the amount of the 'kitty,' together with the fines they levied upon themselves. I remember, too, that when we got up a subscription to buy a headstone for poor Mac's grave, every man's name appeared upon the paper opposite a good round sum."

## *THE MARK OF THAT MAN MORRISON.*

When I called upon the Old-timer, one morning recently, I found him intently reading the MS. which follows, and which, he stated, he had found the day before while on one of his periodical visits to Monkey Hill. It was worn and discolored by age, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we succeeded in reproducing what is given below ; to this, as well as to the fact that many pages were absolutely undecipherable, the reader must attribute the seeming incongruities and evident disconnectedness of what appears at times to be a psychological study, and at others the ravings of an opium-diseased imagination.

### THE MANUSCRIPT.

It seems many years since my misery came upon me, but it is really not more than eight or possibly ten months. Time passes so swiftly in the tropics, even while the monotony of one's daily life seems to be at times insufferably slow, that when one attempts to locate incidents that happened a comparatively short time ago, it is difficult to place them correctly. In any event, the approximation of the date that I have given will answer the present purposes as well as any other ; for it is not likely that this will ever meet any eyes besides my own. Indeed, I cannot understand why I should feel this unconquerable desire to leave behind me any record of my sufferings whatsoever, as it can benefit no one ; the writer least of all. Still, I feel that I must write !

In the beginning I must state that I am a physician, and, at the time my trouble commenced, was in charge of the hospital of one of the large companies engaged in building the great water-way between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. My work was arduous in the extreme and often I was so weary—so completely worn out—that I was unable to sleep when night came. There was nothing so very strange in that, however, as for months at a time I was called at any and all hours ; the result being that I was, at length, as near as possible to living in a state of constant wakefulness.

Any medical man will tell you that if this condition obtains for too long a time, nervous prostration is sure to follow. This was my experience, and, after four years of unremitting toil, I was laid upon the shelf to make room for a younger and more vigorous man.

Unfortunately, I had contracted obligations, to meet which I needed all the money I had been able to save, so, like many another, I was unable to take the sea voyage and trip to my mother country that was at this juncture the one thing needful to make my recovery even possible. Anyone who has passed a term of years in this place will readily admit that the "pace" is not infrequently such that even the longest purse is, now and then, in a rather depleted condition. One is rarely satisfied with the comforts of life—the luxuries are necessary to make the days pass away at all pleasantly. Indeed, I have often wondered at my weakness in this respect, as I am naturally of a cold and calculating disposition. Be that as it may, however, my illness found me entirely unprepared to give myself the important remedy of change, and accordingly I rented a small cottage in a little suburb, near which was located the cemetery of the corporation in whose employment I had passed so many years. Here, with an old colored woman who had served me for a long time in the capacities of nurse, cook and laundress, to attend to my few wants, I settled down to a life of silent misery; to a life such as I would shudder to wish for my dearest enemy.

The suburb I have mentioned is built upon a hill, and my humble abode is situated almost exactly upon the top of it. From my small balcony, upon which I have hung my hammock, I can overlook the cemetery and the busy little city beyond. Many are the long nights I have passed in that shabby old hammock, looking with eyes that I strove vainly to close in sleep, down at the lights in the town and upon the vessels that line the bay.

But I must hasten. I began this narrative four days ago, but for two whole days I have not been able to hold a pen. \* \* \* I must work while I can, and be as brief as I can, if I hope to conclude it.

\* \* \* \*

I hope that these lines may never be read by another, but in the event of my not finding courage to destroy them and thus they reach other eyes, I must impress upon the mind of the reader three things: First, my condition of almost total nervous prostration; second, my lonely and isolated position, and, third—and I am almost ashamed to confess it—the habit I

## THE MARK OF THAT MAN MORRISON.

have long since formed of taking morphine in large doses. Add to these the fact that, although a physician and as such accustomed to death in its most ghastly forms, I entertain the most profound horror of lifeless clay, and the possible reader will, I trust, be *en rapport* with the mental and physical wreck whose story they tell.

\* \* \* \*

Well, one night in the latter part of the month of March, before the rains that make day as well as night almost insupportable in the tropics, had set in, I was more sleepless than ever—if such a thing could be possible—and lay, as usual, in my hammock, staring down the hillside. The little silver syringe that I have clung to through all my poverty had utterly failed to give me even its accustomed feeble aid, although I had made more applications of it than I care to state. The hours dragged their weary lengths along, oh, so slowly ! The only comfort I could secure was in the music of the bells on the ships in the harbor, whose strokes, at wonderfully long intervals, gave the assurance to my tired brain that time had not altogether ceased and the eternal night begun !

I thought of everything in the world, under the world, and around the world. At last I began to think of the different cases I had had down there in that sleeping city. One by one I reviewed the symptoms and peculiarities of each ; criticised my treatment of them, and recalled the words of gratitude to which I had listened from those who, through my instrumentality, had recovered their health and returned to their homes ; and finally, I forced myself to remember and rehearse the last words of those who had been carried from the hospital to their endless rest among the trees whose branches were waving in the moonlight, almost at my very feet.

Again I wept over the tender messages that I was commissioned to convey to dear ones far away ; again I listened to savage curses and despairing cries ! Once more I bent my ear to catch whispered confessions of awful wrongs and terrible crimes ; once more I touched with loathing and abhorrence the cold and clammy bodies of the dead !

\* \* \* \*

Adrift on a sea of dreamy remembrances, I had closed my eyes and seemed to pass from alert wakefulness into a condition of semi-consciousness that resembled sleep only “as mist resembles the rain.” The deep boom of the far-away ocean, as it broke in monotonous rhythm over the

reef that stretches around the bay, was, I felt, fast lulling my senses into an abyss of total forgetfulness ; and, with a long drawn sigh of content, I opened my eyes for one last look at the beautiful moon-lit valley.

Oh ! curses upon that look ! Forever, curses, curses, curses upon the instinct that inspired it ! Nevermore shall I sleep ! Nevermore shall I rid my eyes of the sight that greeted them !

At first I was not conscious of the presence of anything unusual in my surroundings. I closed my eyes again to the blissful enjoyment of the first sleep that had visited them for days. In a comatose condition, as is well known, the optic nerve is, like all others, slow in conveying impressions to the brain ; the image of what is seen is retained upon the retina, however, and at length impressed upon the mind.

Hardly had I composed myself when I was at first faintly, and then powerfully impelled to believe in the fact that a familiar form was standing at my side. I struggled in vain to rid myself of the idea—told myself repeatedly that it was absurd, impossible ! Vainly, vainly ! I swore to myself by all the oaths of men and of devils that I would not open my eyes, and then—opened them !

Above me stood the hated figure of that man Morrison !

\* \* \* \*

About the time that my illness began to assume the serious form that finally necessitated my retirement from work, a man who had arrived in the town one morning, no one knew from where, was brought to the hospital by the government authorities, apparently in the last stages of consumption. From a single card found upon his person, and upon which was printed the single name, "Morrison," and, from lack of any other means of ascertaining his real identity, I directed that this name should be registered upon the books opposite the number of his case.

Terribly emaciated, and almost pulseless, he looked at me, when I at length visited his cot, with eyes from which shone the unquenchable fires of an eternal vitality. Speechless from physical weakness, the language of those eyes was more audible, more articulate—if I may so describe the sensation I experienced on first beholding them—than any combination of tongue, throat and lungs could by any possibility express. They spoke of unswerving determination to live, and of unalterable defiance of death, and they told of the knowledge of the utter futility and horror of it all !

Although the case was an entirely hopeless one, I immediately set about

applying the best remedies known to me for the amelioration of his weakness, and strove by every means at hand to assist him to gain sufficient strength to speak, as the dullest perception could readily comprehend that to do so was his great desire.

On the following morning I found my patient resting apparently much easier, but with the lurid light burning still more fiercely in his eyes. While I was listening, with my head to his chest, to his labored breathing, I was startled to hear the sound of a human voice proceeding, seemingly, from beneath the cot upon which he was lying. I say human, but it was only human in that the language was human—the tone was positively inhuman ! I quickly turned, and, stooping down, looked under the bed to discover, if possible, who it was that could be guilty of so miserable an attempt to joke in the very presence of death. To my astonishment, no one was there. I looked around the room—saving ourselves, not a living thing was in sight ! \* \* \* And then I was seized with such a fit of nervous trembling that my stethoscope fell with a crash to the floor, from hands which shook as if palsied. I turned to the window, and endeavored to compose myself, but it was nearly an hour before I could sufficiently overcome my weakness to look at Morrison. When I did so, his eyes met mine, and, despite every effort on my part to resist the spell, I was compelled to pick up my stethoscope and again place it to the bony bosom before me.

In order to make a more careful examination than before, I unbuttoned the soiled and frayed undershirt that Morrison wore, and baring his left breast, sought the most favorable position on which to place my instrument.

There, in figures that seemed to blind me by their vividity, I saw the fateful numbers of Swedenborg: 6-6-6 !—the numbers that represent the embodiment of all evil ! For, as you may know, the number six represents perfection—goodness and truth. So, in the reverse sense, does it represent imperfection ; and, when doubled, it denotes still greater imperfection ; while, if tripled, it indicates that nothing—absolutely nothing—of truth and goodness remains !

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I am rooted and grounded in the belief of the so-called mysticism of the immortal Swedenborg. I believe that matter derives its existence from spiritual substances which are the only realities ; that the sun of



our earthly system originates from the spiritual sun, and that the material substances of our earth have their birth from spiritual substances ; that material creation exists from, and by, spiritual creation, and that, consequently, every material object is the embodiment of some spiritual idea and corresponds, in its forms and uses, to its spiritual prototype. I believe that to every mortal there comes, at least once in his lifetime, either a vision or a materialization of his physical and mental condition as it will be when he struggles with the hooded angel of death.

As I stood beside Morrison, I knew that the form before me was a materialization of the condition that awaits me ! The voice that I had heard was my voice ! The agony so easily read in those eyes was the agony that awaits me ! That wasted and unkempt frame will be my physical state when I lie down for the last time ! The mark upon that breast is the mark upon my soul ! As I looked, I knew that my sins were unpardoned and unpardonable ! For an instant the veil of the future was rent in twain, and I saw \* \* \* Then, all was darkness !

A while later one of the nurses of the hospital discovered me lying across the bed. *Morrison had disappeared !*

I was taken home, and the next day found me at my post as usual ; but shortly it was discovered that I had become entirely unfitted for my duties, and, with a generous gratuity, I was dismissed from the service. I came to this spot, and for these weary months—it seems years !—I have lived say, rather, existed !—every moment haunted by the memory of that awful form. Never did it materialize again, however, until that horrible night. Now, every night, at the hour of its first appearance, does it stand before me !

\* \* \* \*

I grow feebler and feebler, and, as I write, I know that the end is near. The old woman of whose faithfulness I felt so sure, has left me. I am entirely dependent upon the service of a barefooted lad whom the most liberal bribes will scarce induce to come near me more than once in two days. A few curious faces occasionally peer through the dingy windowpane at me, but not another soul comes into the room. I know that each succeeding day finds me more and more like the awful shape that lay before me in the hospital. \* \* \* Already I nerve myself for the useless struggle with the fell angel, and I know that my eyes are gradually assuming the agonized expression that I saw in the eyes of my

## THE MARK OF THAT MAN MORRISON.

mysterious patient. And—horror upon horrors!—I cannot close them without seeing, in figures of flame, those prophetic figures: “6-6-6!”—the mark of that man Morrison!

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After our labor had been completed I turned to the Old-timer, who had become suddenly very silent, and said:

“Can this be possible?”

With that far-away look which is all his own, he replied, “Who knows?”

## TIMKINS' NIGHTMARE.

"By the way, did you see Timkins when he passed through on his way South, last week?" inquired the Old-timer. We had wasted half of our precious hour speculating over the annual westward flight of the butterflies that always occurs about this time of the year, and wondering where the sunny bourne to which they all seem bound is situated. Accepting my rather dubious nod as an answer to his question, he proceeded to relate another of his grewsome reminiscences:

"The new addition to the Company's quarters had just been completed at the time this happened," said he, "and all the boys were pulling wire at a great rate to secure rooms in it. Our old commissary was a cantankerous sort of a duffer—all commissaries are, you know, for that matter—and he kept us all on the anxious seat as long as he possibly could. Timkins, however, by dint of almost hourly applications, managed at length to get a room on the upper floor, facing the sea, and quit his 'check' on the wharf at four o'clock one afternoon, in great glee, to move his Lares and Penates, consisting of the regulation folding canvas-covered chair, the usual number of 'fancy' pictures, and one small grip containing his extra shirt and his jug of 'Honey-suckle,'—you see, we traveled light in those days—to his new *quarto*. Only four of us, I think, had succeeded at the time in getting transferred to the 'annex,' as it was then called, and it was rather lonesome especially at night time. The partitions did not extend to the ceiling, on account of the better circulation of air thus acquired, and the slightest noise made at one end of the house could be easily heard at the other. I remember distinctly how I used to lie awake, long after the rest had gone to bed, and listen to the stentorian breathing of some 'over-loaded' snorer, sleeping perhaps, ten rooms away. A snore would fly up and strike the ceiling of his room—echo! Rebound and hit the partition—echo! Turn itself loose in the next room, a vacant one—*five* echoes!—distinct ones, too!—and so on

all over the place, each echo louder than the one preceding it. Now don't laugh ; it's true, I tell you !

" Of course Timkins had to celebrate his advent among us—few opportunities for celebration were neglected, then—and so he brewed a planter's punch in his wash-bowl, and after dinner invited us to his house-warming. I forget just how many times that bowl was replenished, but anyhow the time flew by with tentless heed, and it was between the late and early when the party disbanded and each member sought his ' Peerless ' to sleep it off.

" I must have fallen asleep as I touched my pillow, and the cares of earth concerned me not until along towards morning, when I was awaked by Timkins, who rushed into my room regardless of chairs and center-table. I will never forget the look of horror and fright upon his face as he sank, or, rather, fell upon my bed. I had neglected to turn down my lamp when I retired, so I could see him clearly. His naturally ruddy face was as white as the foam of the sea in the moonlight, and his prominent pale blue eyes fairly bulged from their sockets.

" ' What's the matter, Tim ? ' said I, ' got 'em again ? Is ' the man with the poker ' after you ? '

" ' No, no, ' he gasped, ' it's the great Patagonian man-eating monster ! '

" ' Oh, say now, *don't*, ' I growled ; ' for heaven's sake go to bed and let me sleep ! I've got to get up at the first whistle, and I'm dead tired. '

" ' You may thank your lucky stars that you are not dead—*dead* ! ' he panted, wiping his streaming forehead upon the sleeve of his shirt.

" By this time I was completely awake, and seeing the necessity of soothing him, told him to tell me what it was all about ; where he had ever heard of the Patagonian monstrosity, and how he had ever seen it. I asked him what it looked like, and what it had been doing to him to get him into such a state of excitement. He was entirely broken up, and for a few moments the great strong fellow sobbed like a child. At last I gathered from him the fact that, when we had left his room, he had undressed and gotten ready for bed, but not feeling sleepy, had passed a quarter of an hour in tacking his ' picture gallery ' about the walls ; and then, drawing his folding chair to the open doorway, had sat for some time looking at the ' rollers ' as they dashed over the reef. It was a beautiful night, I remember, and, as I have found many times, there is nothing so calculated to soothe the nerves and induce sleep as this very thing, I know that he must have succumbed to the persuasion of the drowsy god

almost immediately. He swore by all that was holy, however, that such was not the case. I could never get him to repeat his account of what happened, afterward, so I am obliged to give you the story in my own words.

"As he sat there, looking out upon the ocean, his attention was suddenly attracted by what seemed to be a floating tree, rising and falling with the waves. Two gnarled and fantastically shaped roots reared their extremities above the white-capped billows, and, strangely enough, appeared to move, as if alive. He listlessly watched the object as it slowly drifted closer and closer to the shore ; then, partially turning his head, he dreamily gazed at the long line of silvery froth that stretched from Toro Point, a long distance out to sea. Finally he looked back at the supposed tree ; what was his surprise to find that part of it had seemingly been cast over the fence into the park that fronts the building ! There was no sea running that could have possibly done that, he thought, and sitting bolt upright in his chair, he peered through the hazy light at the curious object.

"Ha ! It *moved*—unmistakably !

"Slowly, and with a horribly sinuous motion, it dragged itself toward the house, one end of it still remaining in the water ! The two heads, that he had taken for tree-roots, lifted themselves higher in the air, and a phosphorescent glow shone from four large spots on them, like the baleful eyes of a Gorgon ! Frozen with terror, he sat as if strapped to his chair. Writhing and swaying, twisting and turning, onward and onward it came ! Loftier and more lofty rose the waving heads, until they towered above the ground to the level of the balcony hand-rail ! Nearer and nearer it approached the palings ! The awful eyes—now become a ghastly pink in color—glared down upon him ; and from what seemed nostrils, formed like the trunk of an elephant and nearly as large, there shot suddenly a sickening vapor that overcame his senses for the moment and he fell forward from his chair to the sill of his door, where he lay without even the power or strength to tremble !

"How long he lay there he never knew, but at last a sickly, crunching sound, as of a heavy body falling to the cement pavement below, encouraged him to look up. The monster was not to be seen, and, tottering to the railing of the balcony, he looked with fear-blinded eyes down at the sidewalk. There he saw a human form lying flat upon its back with its arms flung out above its head !

## TIMKINS' NIGHTMARE.

In vain I ridiculed his preposterous story ; he insisted and implored, and, finally, to get rid of him, I consented to dress and descend with him to see who it was. Just below the room occupied by Timkins we found the body of our yard-master, who, but a few hours before, had been the merriest of our merry party ! He was not dead, but entirely insensible, and we hastened for the Company's surgeon, who, fortunately, lived but a few steps away. He returned with us, and, after a hasty examination, said that poor Parke's skull was badly fractured, and directed him to be taken to the hospital. In the morning he died—never having recovered consciousness sufficiently to explain the cause of his accident. We have always supposed that, becoming restless from the heat, he had gone out on the balcony and sat upon the rail, as this was then a favorite custom of ours. He must have been overtaken by sleep, and, losing his balance, fallen to the pavement.

“Timkins' nightmare was the cause of our sad discovery, and, after the shock of the affair had worn away, I often tried to induce him to again relate his dream, but was never successful. The memory of it remains so vividly with him, that even when I saw him the other day he absolutely refused to talk with me about it.

“Weird coincidence, though, wasn't it ? And what a strange name for a sea-serpent !”

## ANCIENT HISTORY.

"You will get no blood-curdling tales from me to-day," remarked the Old-timer the other morning when I dropped into his office for our customary chat. "Tastes differ, and however much my 'grewsome reminiscences,' as you are pleased to call them, interest and entertain *you*, the dear public likes a change now and then. Prepare yourself, therefore, for a little ancient history—ancient, simply because we of the Isthmus grow to look upon the happenings of thirty or forty years ago as being quite, if not entirely, prehistoric. Why this is so I leave you to explain. Perhaps the monotony of our every-day life and the hardly varying temperature of our climate have something to do with it—perhaps the many and rapid changes in our population and in the appearance or the topography of the country have more. Settle it to suit yourself. It's true, just the same.

"It was early in the year 1849, a year after the wonderful discoveries of gold in California, and before the Isthmus had assumed its later importance as a pathway for the enthusiastic fortune seekers who were thronging to the new El Dorado of the West, that Col. Hughes, of the U. S. Army, landed his little party somewhere near where we are now sitting, doubtless, and began the first survey for the purpose of locating the line of the 'Parent Company.'

"If you have ever attempted to explore the almost unexplorable wilds of the Chagres country; if you have ever floundered around the Santa Rita lagoons as I have, or paddled a canoe through the dark and mysterious windings of their hidden *caletas*, where even at mid-day the light is as dim as dusk and the tangled undergrowth obstructs your every movement, and the stench of decaying vegetation is nauseating even to the strongest stomach; you may, possibly, if your imagination is very powerful indeed, form a very faint idea of the difficulties of this undertaking. For thirteen miles their work lay in a swamp the like of which only the low countries of the tropics can produce. It was alligators and snakes,

toads and lizards ; in fact, a veritable *monia a potu* of creeping, crawling, slimy things ! Even after this distance had been passed their way was difficult enough, the Lord knows, to give the most dauntless pause. Quicksands, rivers and seemingly bottomless pits to cross ; mountainous precipices to scale and presumably impenetrable forests, swarming with all of the noxious reptiles and beasts of the tropics, to cut through ; it is simply miraculous that they completed their task. But they *did* complete it, and their work was well done, too, for even the immortal Trautwine found little to correct when he came to lay the iron road that was destined to convert a howling wilderness into the highway of the world.

“ Manzanilla Island—where you and I have now such pleasant homes, and where we are surrounded by the comforts that only civilization can give—was, apparently, the most irredeemable morass that nature had ever planned, when, in 1850, the axe and the *machete* were first laid at the roots of the mangroves, palms and lusty vines that completely covered it. No one could live here ; an old vessel lying in what is now our beautiful harbor, was the home of this vanguard of progress to whom the world of to-day owes its lasting gratitude.

“ After the first clearing and filling, no doubt some sought the shore to be rid of the seasickness from which all suffered more or less. Indeed, it was only the other day that an old friend of ours told me that he, in company with another man, slept for over six months under an overturned rowboat on the beach. He's well and hearty to-day—jolly, too, by jove ! Just think of it, will you ?

“ Yes, just think of it ! Think of the labors of those five years ! Think of the toil, the suffering, the death ! Sometimes I believe that Jean Valjean, that most patient of men, would have ‘ turned back from the plough ’ in the face of the ever-increasing obstacles and dangers. To work all day in the mud and stagnant water, beneath the scorching rays of the sun, or in the pitiless rain, and then, weary beyond words, to lie down on a board bed in the old and crowded hulk, with thirsty mosquitoes and ravenous sand-flies to render every night sleepless, with sick and perhaps dying comrades moaning about you, requires more courage than is often met with in our days !

“ No pageant, no holiday, no firing of cannon or beating of drum marked the opening of one of the greatest undertakings of the century—no public demonstration celebrated its completion. From August, 1850, when the work of construction was really begun, until the midnight of



## ANCIENT HISTORY.

the 27th of January, 1855, when, in the pitchy darkness and the driving rain, the last rail was laid and the last spike driven so that on the morrow the first locomotive that ever crossed land from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans might make its marvelous journey, every day and every night was a battle—as grandly and as bravely fought as any recorded in the annals or histories of the world ! The lives laid down, the sufferings so manfully borne, are as deserving of the commendation of the people of the earth, the praises of poets and the strains of song-makers as the noblest deeds of the past or future ! The names of Aspinwall, Stephens and Chauncey, Totten, Trautwine and Baldwin, should and shall rank peers with those of the greatest generals of ancient or modern times ; their memories should and shall be crowned with the wreaths of Fame's unfading laurel that a hero-loving world delights to bestow upon the great, the good and the glorious ! ‘ Hath not Peace her victories as renowned as those of war ? ’

“ Good morning, my son,” concluded the Old-timer, as he tramped upstairs to breakfast. “ Go and read what my friend Otis says about it all.”

## *HOW TOM SHARPE GOT THE JOB AT FRIJOLES.*

"I think it was in the year '53."

The Old-timer leaned back in his chair and reflectively twirled between his thumb and second finger, a Chiriqui idol that dangled from his watch-chain. No counterfeit, this idol, either—for in these days of almost universal iconoclasm, you must know, the insatiate money-maker is really engaged in the manufacture of false gods—but a genuine relic, dug many years ago from what must have been the tomb of a Cacique, judging from the number of golden toys—sacred and secular—found therein.

"Yes, I am sure of the date," he continued, "for I remember that the 'Road' was open only as far as Gatun. Mr. Baldwin, the engineer, and I, were standing upon the balcony of the old office—opposite 'Number 4,' you know—watching a procession of laborers who had just landed from the steamer, as they passed down the street on their way to the quarters. A hardy-looking lot they were; their faces glowing with the ruddy health of the North. Who can tell how some of them looked before their 'contract' was filled!

"My attention was suddenly attracted by a movement of my companion, and glancing at him I saw that he was making signs to one of the party to come up to where we were standing. Presently I noticed a burly fellow stepping from the ranks and in a moment or so we heard a knock at the office-door, and upon Mr. Baldwin's shout of 'come in,' we were joined by the hero of this little yarn. He was one of the finest specimens of muscular humanity I have ever seen—over six feet in height and of splendid proportions.

"'What is your name?' asked Mr. B.

" 'Tom Sharpe, sir,' replied the man, in a broad Yorkshire dialect that it would be futile for me to attempt to imitate.

" 'Can you write?'

" 'Yes, sir; a little.'

" 'Can you fight?'

" 'Well, sir, I can do a little of that too,' answered Tom. 'The fact is, sir, I've had to leave home because I put the 'Tappit Hen' too much to sleep in a little 'mill' a couple of months ago.'

" 'Sit down at the desk there,' said Mr. Baldwin, 'and give me a specimen of your hand-writing.'

" Tom accordingly sat down and with some little effort wrote his name and trade—that of a blacksmith.

" 'Very fair indeed, my man,' remarked Baldwin, after he had examined the paper. 'Now I suppose you would not object to something a little better than a common laborer's job, would you?'

" 'No, sir,' replied Tom; 'I'm wishful of bettering myself if I can.'

" 'Very well, then, report here to-morrow morning at seven o'clock and I'll see if I can't put you in that way,' and with these words of dismissal, Mr. Baldwin turned to me and resumed the description of his proposed bridge for Barbacoas, that the passing of the laborers and the interview with Sharpe had interrupted.

" Right here, my friend," interpolated the Old-timer, "I wish to impress upon your mind the fact that to the tireless energy, indomitable will and remarkable resource possessed and exerted by this man Baldwin, the early and successful completion of our famous 'highway' is due, far more than to the efforts—practical, I mean, not theoretical or financial—of any other one man. For this statement I have the proof of Colonel Totten's own words. How it was that his health did not break down under the fearful strain, I have never been able to understand. Should another monument ever be erected to another 'trinity,' in our beautiful beach park, I would like the choosing of the busts for the '*bas-reliefs*.'

" Well, to return to Tom, I heard or thought nothing of him until, about three days after, being again in the old office with Mr. Baldwin, the boss of the construction force at Frijoles, a regular Hercules in stature entered the room. This man, whose name was Bill Flynn, had been the terror of the whole line for several months and was noted for his great pugilistic abilities and quarrelsome disposition. His men were terribly afraid of him, and on more than one occasion he had been known to frightfully abuse

them. To his brutal treatment more than one of the poor fellows had succumbed and been laid away in the bushes with the black cross above his body. He was a bully, and, consequently, of course, a blackguard. Recently Mr. Baldwin himself had been unable to handle him, and had been greatly delayed with his work on the Frijoles section thereby.

“You should have seen the fellow as he limped over to Baldwin’s desk and asked for his ‘time-check’ and passage order to the ‘States.’ Of all the changes in manner I have ever witnessed this was the most notable. It was a complete metamorphosis, if ever there was one. And his appearance—oh, you *should* have seen him! One arm hung in a sling of dirty cotton, and one half of his ugly face was covered with a plantin-leaf poultice held in place by a portion of an old bandanna handkerchief. The eye that was uncovered was draped in the deepest mourning you can imagine, and down his blood-stained nose there gaped a canal as deep, proportionately, as the ‘Culebra Cut.’ I gazed at him in amazement, but Mr. Baldwin exhibited no surprise and asked no questions, as he directed the necessary documents to be prepared and quietly resumed his work.

“After Flynn had left the office, Mr. Baldwin called a messenger and told him to go down to the quarters and tell Tom Sharpe that he wanted to see him. In a few minutes that worthy appeared, looking in even better health than when he had written his name a few days before, in the hope of promotion.

“‘Now, Tom,’ said Mr. Baldwin, ‘tell us all about it.’

“‘Well, sir,’ replied Tom, ‘there’s nothing much to tell;’—yet I thought I observed a merry twinkle in his clear blue eye—‘the morning you spoke to me about the Frijoles (he called it Fridge-owls!) job I took the train to Gatun and walked on up the clearin’ past the quarry as far as the river. I went across on the false-work and started up the right of way. Just as you told me, sir, I hadn’t gone far before a big tall fellow, who I knew in a second was Flynn, yells out to me, ‘What do you want around here?’ I says nothin’ and out he shouts again the same thing and comes scramblin’ down the bank towards me. I could see that what you said was true, sir, an’ that I was not goin’ to be bothered to pick a row with him. ‘Oh, nothin’,’ says I, ‘what business is it of yours, anyway?’ ‘I’ll show you,’ says he, and with that he jumps for me. I jumps to one side, and as he passed me I patted him one under the chin, and, sir, he laid down as quiet as any baby. Up he jumps again, though, and makes another drive for me, and this time I landed two good ones on his nozzle,

## HOW TOM SHARPE GOT THE JOB AT PRIJOLES.

and as he swung round I think my left touched his collar-bone. By this all the gang was standin' around and cheering me. You see, sir, he was excited and I wasn't—that's where I had him'—said Tom, modestly. ' Every time he got up I knocked him over, and finally, when he wouldn't get up any more, I made two or three of the Coolies pick him up for me. When he said he'd got enough, I told him you wanted to see him in your office. I met him just now, down the street, but he didn't seem to know me. Has he resigned, sir?'

" ' Yes, Tom,' replied Mr. Baldwin, ' and as you have done your first work so thoroughly to my satisfaction, I will keep my promise. *You've got the job at Prijoles!* ' "

## THE DIAMOND FISHERMAN.

“ It was in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-one ; the second day of April was the day of Grace, and the hour of Mercy was exactly five o'clock past meridian, as the gentleman who was the victim of the tragedy I am about to relate to you stepped on board of a *cayuco* of the larger size—manned by four *remeros* (paddlers), one of whom owned the canoe,—and started on the voyage from the famous village of Cruces down the Chagres river to the anchorage at its mouth, where lay the steamer next due to leave for the United States. The gentleman, whose name, alas ! we will never know, had but just arrived at Cruces, and instead of waiting over night, as was the usual custom, had insisted on proceeding upon his way. After much difficulty he had found the only boatman who was willing to undertake the task, the Chagres being just ‘convalescing’ from one of its well-known ‘tantrums,’ and by no means the quiet stream the passing travelers see from the car windows as they are whirling from the Atlantic to the Pacific in these times. For days no boats had arrived from below, the rushing current being absolutely unstemable (do I coin a word ?) and but one, and that of the largest of the river craft, had ventured to cast itself loose from its mooring on the high bank and dare the dangerous eddies and more dangerous flotsam, the day before, for the lower passage.

“ Travelers who had seen the river in the state it then was, endeavored to dissuade the gentleman from the undertaking, but in vain ; he seemed, for reasons that he did not communicate, to be feverishly anxious to continue his journey. Although comfortably and neatly clad, he had not the appearance of one of the *nouveau riche* even at this early date returning from the “ Golden State ” to live in the enjoyment of their gains in the

cities of the North—basking in the envy of those who had lacked their courage, and becoming the incentive of others who, doubtfully conservative before, now swelled the ranks of the pioneers, in the hope of equal good fortune.

“The traveler was possessed of very little luggage—but one small, cheap-looking corded trunk, and a hand-bag of the *genre* ycleped, in those days, ‘carpet-sack.’ To this bag, however, he clung most tenaciously, sitting with it in his lap as he ate the early dinner that had been provided for him at the so-called hotel, and not permitting it to leave his possession for a single moment while making his arrangements for departure. Months after the events of the fateful evening that was just falling upon the distant Andean foot-hills had occurred, many who had witnessed the embarkation of the lonely stranger, remembered and spoke of the peculiar care he bestowed upon that homely hand-bag, and added their testimony to the evidence already possessed by the public, of one of the unravelled mysteries of the Chagres.

“Now, as to the chief boatman, his name was Pablo Belasquez, and, until three months previous to the date of which I speak, he had pursued the humble vocation of a fisherman, and made his home in the old town of Chagres, under the frowning cliff upon whose summit rises in moss-grown grandeur, even to-day, the majestic ruins of the castle San Lorenzo. Hither Morgan came, in 1671, reeking with the blood of women and children, from the smoking city of Porto Bello, and—but of this, another time.

“Three months before, as I have just stated, this Pablo had accompanied a party up the river that had conveyed quite a number of travelers on their way to Cruces, from thence to proceed overland to the Pacific, where they intended to join others and take ship for San Francisco.

*“This party never arrived at Cruces!”*

“Traces of a bloody deed were discovered a few days later, and, a search being instituted, the bodies of thirteen Americans—including a child and two women—were found in various stages of decomposition. At least, so says a local historian. An effort was made to apprehend the perpetrators of this awful crime, and, in fact, several of them were brought to justice and suffered the death penalty.

*“Pablo Belasquez was not molested!”*

“Shortly after, this man who had hitherto never been known to possess money to more than support himself and family in the most wretched

manner, suddenly grew rich, and from a fisher of the succulent red-snapper, became a fisher of men! In other words, he bought several large boats and entered into the business of transporting travelers up and down the river.

“ ‘ *He had received a legacy* ’ he said.

“ He was a man of rather more than less than six feet in height, and when, occasionally, the current ran so strongly that another paddle became an imperative necessity, he stripped himself to the waist and bent to his work; the mighty muscles of his back, chest and arms shining with perspiration, and cording themselves like whip-snakes with every motion of his body, were the admiration of all who saw him. He had two peculiarities that I well remember—his wonderfully soft and pleasant demeanor to his passengers and crew, and his ever-present smile. No one, I believe, ever saw him without that smile! He was, indeed,

‘ —as mild a mannered man  
As ever scuttled ship or cut a throat!’

“ Such was the owner and commander of the long, narrow and pointed craft in which the stranger had made arrangements to dare the perils of the rushing torrent. The crew consisted of but three others, brown and brawny fellows of the type you so well know, each of whom, as he stepped into the boat, unslung his *machete*—the sword-knife of the tropics—that hung by a leather thong from his naked shoulders, and placed it by his side as he seated himself on the narrow board that forms a thwart of the dug-out. Pablo sat in the stern, the traveler just in front of him, and the three others at regular intervals to the bow, towards which the faces of all were turned. With a final push of the paddles the frail craft glides into the stream, to be instantly borne out of the sight of the on-lookers around the bend of the river.

“ Shall we, exercising our peculiar privilege, follow them? \* \* \* No word is spoken for the first half hour, the paddlers being closely engaged in keeping the *cayuco* in the center of the stream. Soon, however, this is accomplished with less effort, and Pablo says to the stranger, in his soft and tender voice, ‘ The señor need fear not the danger; Pablo will care him good.’ After this, a low, disconnected conversation is carried on, whenever the management of the boat will permit, between captain and crew; the traveler communing with his thoughts.

“ Quickly the mantle of night spreads itself over the far-away hills and nearer banks of the river. The trees on either shore gradually melt into



## THE DIAMOND FISHERMAN.

a wall of bluish darkness. On they rush, and the moon at last sheds its fitful light between the hiatuses of the eager clouds. At last the final bend in the river, ere it curves around the old and thatch-hutted village of Gatun and sweeps in broader stretches to the sea, is reached. Swiftly the lights on the quiet shore fade into the general gloom, and soon the rocky hills that rise precipitously from the water's edge at Mindi are dimly discernible in the passing moonlight. Another bend in the river, another light upon the shore, and, rapidly as a darting lizard seeks its shelter beneath the decaying log, the canoe shoots from its position in the center of the stream into a narrow inlet, the existence of which a tyro in the navigation of tropical rivers would never suspect.

"A sound of grating sand—a long and gurgling sigh—a murmur of voices, in which may be distinguished the soft and musical tones of Pablo—and the *cayuco* reappears and glides on its way to Chagres! But four occupants are revealed in the boat when next the moon smiles from the blue! No trunk is visible, but lying at Pablo's feet is *the traveler's hand-bag!*

\* \* \* \*

"A month after, the mild and gentle 'fisher of men' moves to the new town that is springing up on the shores of Limon Bay, and becomes a merchant. No matter how fiercely others are obliged to struggle to obtain an existence, Pablo smiles his eternal and unruffled smile, revealing his white, widely-set and pointed teeth, and, by a trusty messenger, makes occasional shipments of small packages to foreign ports.

"A year after, Pablo wears upon the little finger of his right hand a magnificent diamond! Why should he not? Is he not The Diamond Fisherman?"

"Who *was* that poor stranger?" I asked the Old-timer.

"A diamond peddler on his way from Peru to the States," he replied.



# SKETCHES



## *HIS EVIL SELF.*

### A CHRISTMAS STORY.

Talk about a train of thought ! Surely no one ever boarded such a "train" as I did last night about half-past eleven, pulled as it was by that queer little engine (little, but oh ! how powerful !) Memory, and with that old engineer, Conscience, at the throttle.

The servant had cleared the table of the last remnants of our supper, and had left nothing upon it but a bottle of old Pommard (the most glorious wine in the world, by the way), one of our choicest specimens of the Bacarat glassmaker's art, a package of "Carolinas," and my student lamp. The latter not on account of my particular studiousness, but for the light it gives—when it chooses to. It's a mighty independent lamp, that lamp is, and regulates its light according to its own sweet will, sometimes shooting its flame out of the chimney like a miniature blast furnace, and at others dropping it to as near the "going-out" point as possible, consistent with giving any light at all. Still, to do it simple justice, I must say that it takes these fits only occasionally.

I recall the time distinctly, for the gong of the clock had just struck the half hour. We have one of those "Cathedral" affairs that some drowsy fellow who, like Dickens' fat boy, always wanted to sleep, invented for the torture of his brother-man who suffers from insomnia. The wife and "kid" had gone to bed, and the watchman at the gate had composed himself for a comfortable snooze in the hour that would pass before the roundsman would visit his post again. Even the sea that had been roaring over the reef all day with more than usual fierceness, seemed to have remembered what night it was and had softened its wild song into a tender hymn, as if it were anxious to typify the gentleness of the Child whose birth all the world would joyfully commemorate in the morning.

I must have nearly "polished off" the bottle of Burgundy, and had made a large cavity in the package of "Carolinas," I know. The author of the book I was reading had paused in his relation of other people's joys and sorrows to give to the world his own ideas of "Manifest Destiny"—

not without at the same time delivering himself of a long essay on "Metempsychosis," and that sort of thing. I believe that the dullness of his utterances, and not the wine, was what put me to sleep, anyhow; and any one who knows what good old Pommard is will agree with me, I am sure of that. I wish I was as sure that I was asleep at all. As I think the whole matter over, I am inclined to the belief that I was as wide awake as I had ever been in my life.

I remember closing the book (without turning down the corner of the leaf, mind you!), lighting another "Carrie," and laying my head back in a very easy corner of my chair. I might have closed my eyes—I am not at all positive about that, either, but I know that I turned my head away from the lamp, which was at that time on its good behavior.

I can recall nothing in the book I had been reading that should have caused me to do so, but I fell to thinking of my boyhood days and the merry Christmases I used to spend in the old New England home. I lived over again the excitement of hanging up my stocking, and my annual regret that it was not larger. How eagerly I wished the morrow! Wondered over and over again if I would get the pair of "rocker" skates that I so longed for, to replace a pair of those old enormities with the runners sticking away out in front and winding round and round, until they looked like a couple of old-fashioned clock-springs. They had a brass acorn on the end of each "quirl," and were at least three sizes too large for me. They had done yeoman's service for generations, and new holes had been punched in the straps by so many different wearers that I could never get between them, with the smallest blade of my jack-knife, to punch another.

I was pretty sure that I would get the new ones, for they were the burden of my prayers every night since Thanksgiving, when I had been sent to bed at four o'clock in the afternoon for sucking cider through a straw from the new barrel in the cellar.

What a lot of things I wanted that particular Christmas! A pair of high-top boots that would reach to my knees, another of gloves with fur around the wrists—I was too "big" then, or thought I was, to wear mittens,—a "Youth's Companion," all my own, and a game of "Authors." Unlimited quantities of peanut candy and gum drops, of course, and a new knife—six blades!—with, perhaps, a magic lantern—a little larger than Tom Peters', if you please—thrown in.

I got 'em all, too!

How clearly I remembered, as I lay thus cogitating, the morning of that far-away Christmas in the boreal zones! Up at day-break in my bare feet, and back into bed again to examine my treasures—and an exhaustive examination it was, too! Down stairs with the whole plunder, as soon as I heard the hired man building the kitchen fire! Noise? Why, tin trumpets were nothing to it!

Old Ben couldn't make the fire go, the wood was so wet; for the snow had blown down the chimney and built a soft, white mound over the pile that had been brought in the night before to dry. The wood in the old grate smoldered and smoldered, and filled the large room with smoke—so full that my eyes began to smart and I began to cough.

Can it be said of this train of lucid recollection that "'Twas but a Dream?" Yet, as memory recalled that childish bit of coughing, all at once I heard some one behind me echoing the coughs, and in the most peculiar, squeaky, little, far-away voice you ever heard. No! I don't believe you ever heard anything like it at all, in all your life! I am sure you won't, either! It startled me so that I opened my eyes—if they had been closed at all, which I doubt, you know—and turned my head quickly toward the table.

There was that blessed lamp in one of its tantrums, blazing away for all it was worth! All thoughts of boyhood out of my head in an instant, I sprang up to blow it out!

*But I did not do it!*

For there, perched on the top rim of the porcelain shade, with its legs crossed over it, and holding on to the red-hot chimney with one hand, was the tiniest and most outrageous caricature of myself, as I am to-day, that can possibly be imagined!

I sank back in the chair and rubbed my eyes, turned my head away, and looked back again. No use; there it was! A disgusting contemptible copy of the writer of this truthful narrative. Dressed just as I was—hair standing up on its head in every direction—scraggy moustache—little nose—red face, everything! Faithfully—and painfully—correct!

Wait a moment! There was an expression on its face, a look in its eyes, that, as I hope for mercy hereafter, had never been upon, or in mine, to my knowledge! It was the face of a hypocrite, a cynic, a disbeliever in everything good—in short, of a selfish, crafty, greedy man.

I must have looked straight into its baleful little eyes for at least five minutes. I deserve no credit for "nerve" for doing it, though, as I

could no more help it then, than I can avoid shuddering over it now. At length I spoke—and my voice sounded as though it came from a great distance, so faint it was.

"Will you have the goodness," I asked, "to tell me who and what you are?"

Never shall I be able to describe the tone in which the "Thing"—for I can call it nothing else—answered me. It was an exact imitation of my own. In fact, it seemed to me that my natural voice had been divided into halves, and that I had one of them, and the figure squatting so comfortably on the lamp shade with his hand grasping the fiery chimney, had the other.

I will answer neither one nor the other of your questions," it said, for the reason that you know who and what I am, as well as I do myself. I don't mind saying, however, that I have been thinking of this visit for years, and now I have come to stay with you a long while, perhaps, and—well, it is altogether likely that we will never part company again."

"I may conjecture what you are, but I pray you to tell me exactly. You are not altogether sure that you will remain with me forever, then?" I fearfully inquired.

"No," the Thing replied, jumping from the lamp to the table and seizing one of my cigarettes, rolling it, and springing back to his original position on the lamp with incredible swiftness. "You see every man's Evil-self—for that is my highly enjoyable attitude toward you, as you have already surmised—is obliged to appear, at least once, before his Better-self, and tell him truthfully just how hideous he is becoming. We usually choose the night before Christmas, for these little excursions, as almost everybody is in a rather sentimental mood then,—sickly isn't it?—and we are bound to give a man all the show possible, so that he may understand clearly what he is. If, as is usually the case, little or no attention is paid to the visit and the panorama of his past life that we are bound also to display before him, then we are permitted to return in a twelve-month and dispossess that part of his Better-self which still clings to him. Then they take our places; and it is very seldom that they ever get back again to their old quarters, although they have the same chances that we do. Ha! ha! ha! But our case, old man, is quite different!"

Will I ever be able to forget the sly and insinuating look and tone with which the Thing delivered this harangue? He copied me to the life.



Every gesture that he made—even his way of holding his cigarette ; his peculiar grammar and even the inflections of his voice, mimicked me to perfection ! And, for the first time in my life, I saw myself as others had seen me, time after time ! I could have wept with mortification !

" You know, my friend "—(here I winced !)—the Thing went on to say, " that *you* are not one of those namby-pamby fools who try to live virtuous and upright lives. I should say not ! Why, *you* have long since discovered all of the hollowness and shallowness in the lives of those around you ! If any one does you an unsolicited kindness, you always seek for a motive, and generally find it, too, *don't* you ! *You* don't believe in any man's or woman's honesty of purpose, *you* don't ! Catch *you* ! *You* think life is a 'skin game,' *you* do ! 'Everything will be the same a hundred years hence,' you know ! He ! he ! he !

" What do *you* care for Christmas ! It's for children and fools, *isn't* it ? You know that you more than doubt the divinity of the Babe of Bethlehem, every day of your life, even though you were taught to worship Him at your dead mother's knee ! *You* don't believe in any hereafter, and no more do I, my son !

" What's life, anyhow ! Nothing but an infernal grind, and the fellow who grinds the hardest and the fastest, is the man who 'gets there.' This idea of 'doing unto others as you would they should do unto you,' is played out ! That's *your* opinion, and you can bet your last blue chip that it's *mine*, too ! You can 'do unto others,' until the cows come home, but not one o'em does it 'unto you' ! Oh, no ! And that's why I'm so jolly !

" We're just fitted to be life-comrades ! We're selfish, cynical, hypocritical, greedy, crafty, and altogether doubtful of there being any good in this world—or the other, if there is one ! So I'm just going to 'abide with thee,' my boy !"

" My companion for the future, I drink to you ! May we never part !"

With astounding rapidity, the devilish and utterly abhorrent figure leaped from his perch on the lamp to the top of the Burgundy bottle, and doubled himself up on the mouth of it, with his chin resting between his knees and his arms outstretched toward me ; mincing and leering at me, meanwhile, in a manner that the adjective "seductive" utterly fails to describe.

All through this interview, I had experienced the most curious sinking sensations, and now I felt myself growing weaker and weaker ! Suddenly,

## HIS EVIL SELF.

the deep-toned gong of the erstwhile despised "cathedral" clock began striking the hour of twelve, reminding me once more of the Christmases of my boyhood ; when I used to wade to the village church, through the crisp and sparkling snow, at my father's side—stumbling often, but always upheld by his powerful hand—and, grasping the glass at my side, I hurled it with all my strength at the shape upon the bottle, and shouted, " We part *now* ! FOREVER ! ! "

And above the crashing of glass, and the solemn sound of the chiming hour, I heard the strains of that grandest of grand old hymns, as I used to hear it, years and years ago, when I was innocent, and the world was beautiful :

" Joy to the world, the Lord has come ! "

" Why, John ! " cries a voice " what on earth is the matter with you ? Merry Christmas, anyhow, although you *have* broken my pet glass ! Merry, *Merry* Christmas ! "

## AT THE GRAVE OF "JOHN ASPINWALL."

MAY 14TH, 1893.

"MY FRIENDS :—With the death of the man whose body we have just placed in the restful embrace of our mother Earth, has passed away one of the most picturesque characters of Colon, if not of the Isthmus.

Reticent to a degree, no one could ever obtain from him either the name of his native land, or the date of his birth, and his arrival here. Legends have long been current as to both, but, after all, they are but legends and we,—to whom his figure has long since become as familiar as the palms and the sunsets,—prefer to think of him as surrounded in fact by all of the mystery with which our imagination has encloaked him.

After a life so long that the oldest resident in this place of constant migration cannot enlighten us as to its beginning, it truly seems but the irony of Fate, that old age—Time's most relentless weapon,—played so small a part in the tragedy that laid him low.

None of us knew why the always uncertain tread grew so suddenly feebler and more uncertain ; why the ever bowed head bent so noticeably lower and lower day by day, until too late to do more than endeavor to make his end as painless as possible. An accident, trivial in itself—had he received the proper attention at the time of its occurrence—has taken him from us at last. Often will the future discover us unconsciously and vainly looking for his well-known form and listening for his shuffling footsteps.

Poor old John ! From that perpetual gloom of his, what light could he have thrown upon the early history of this city of unwritten—aye ! and unspoken histories ! What tales of life and death he could have told ! What memories lie buried in his grave !

No questioning could break his monosyllabic silence ; knowing much he spoke little ; the stillness of his tomb but typifies the quiet of his life. It may be, in the Nirvana to which his soul hath sped, that the secrets for which, for so many years, his bosom has been the inviolable repository, shall be revealed ; from us they are forever hidden.

## AT THE GRAVE OF "JOHN ASPINWALL."

Standing above the relics of his humanity, there comes to us this thought: May it not be possible that, when the Southern Cross has climbed the starry zenith; when the early dew of dawn is falling; when the zephyrs of the morning are robing themselves for their gladsome pilgrimage, dear old John may be holding sweet converse with the hundreds of friends whom he has assisted to their peaceful rest, and who are now lying so thickly around him.

May his sleep be undisturbed, may the silence he so dearly loved be unbroken until the call, to which we all must respond, summons him to his share in the rights and benefits of that temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

## WELLINGTON.

### AN ETCHING.

There are very few people in our little city, who did not know him. Indeed, when one reflects that for over a quarter of a century he was seen daily upon the streets of the town, performing in an unostentatious and dignified manner his sometimes not altogether agreeable duties, it would be remarkable were the contrary the case. Few, very few, however, are those who note his disappearance from among us, and few, very few, are the inquiries made of me—his old and intimate friend—as to the cause of it. It has often been said by the observant, that at no other spot upon earth where men do congregate to struggle for the favors of the fickle goddess, is selfishness so prominent a characteristic ; and, friend as I am of my country for the nonce, and fond as I have grown of the few who are not wholly transient dwellers in the town, I must confess that I occasionally feel the truth of the statement in all its bitterness. Whenever I think of Wellington—and this is by no means seldom—I long to inaugurate a crusade against our dearest sin, and battle for its extermination.

It was about the year 1865, that he came to dwell among us. His advent was marked by no demonstration, for he was nothing if not undemonstrative. Quietly he assumed the burden that he was to relinquish but with his life. Outside of his very small circle of acquaintances, his steadfastness of purpose was from the first unnoticed. From the first, kind words were the exception and glances of indifference the rule with him. Content, however, or seemingly so, with his lot, he pursued the even tenor of his way through the successive seasons, wet and dry, without a murmur ; cheering us by his patience, and shaming us by his philosophy. A stoic of the stoics, he permitted nothing to disturb the composure of his bearing. From injustice the frequent sufferer, and of neglect the almost daily recipient, his demeanor was constantly that of one who, holding himself above the petty ills of life, performs his part in it with chivalrous exactitude, and accepts its end with the calmness of unalterable conviction.

## WELLINGTON.

Thinking nothing whatsoever of the future state that is such a frequent cause of disquietude with most of us ; recking naught of the promises of reward and punishment, that are more or less constantly present in our thoughts, he met the last grim Visitor with a courage that compelled the admiration of us all. Let us profit as we may by the example of heroism and fortitude so unassumingly but beautifully set before us, and, while mourning its absence, cherish its memory. He was the most un-mulish of mules. His bones lie whitening in the sun, lapped by the waves of the beautiful sea that cheered his life by its ceaseless song, and that chants its endless dirge around the traces of his mortality. In the mystic twilight, far Santa Rita casts its lengthening shadow over him. Darkness falls ! He is alone.

**Where the longitude's mean and the latitude's low ;  
Where the hot winds of summer perennially blow ;  
Where the mercury chokes the thermometer's throat,  
And the dust is as thick as the hair on a goat ;  
Where one's mouth is as dry as a mummy accurst :—  
There lieth the land of perpetual thirst.**













