

THE FAMILY RECORD.

"This notched stick, suspended here
Beside the great hall of our home,
Bids us of old times and ancient page
Of whirr family lore;
It holds the story of our lives,
Each a scene a story, and signs
And in its mystic marks and signs
Our family history dwells.

"It's not as now, when we were young,
Our days were many, and our ways few,
And also very far between,
Our country numbered two—
And in the same hour time,
Was rather far to go;

Remembering that the winters then
Were long, and the snows deep.

"And so the schooling we obtained
(Myself and husband Dick),
Consisted all in marks and signs
And marks on a slate, and a pencil
I used to have in this fact;

The blane if blane there be,
Mark it, and mark it, and mark it,
And not to Dick and me.

"This preface on the end, we noticed
Just sixty years ago, and
When we had built our little hut
And made a home through the snow,

The world's wealth then we possessed,
Not easy to find there then,
Consisted all in marks of steers,
A log-chain, ax and slide.

"But we were young and hopeful, and
Esteemed our prospects great,
The love of home, the family love,
Believing every cent;

We dwelt within a little world
Basking in smiles and sunny-cause,
Living on love and pane.

"This note denotes the day and date
When Dick died, in twenty-one—
Just fifty years this morn.

His smile is still with me long,
His smile of life was few;

For here we noticed him off again
In April, when the flowers were

"With a smile, a trembling hands, I made
This note myself, When Daisy married wild Jack Jones,

And moved off to herself; I had a recklessness life,

And a recklessness left

Ready cash on hand.

"Our cash account we've always kept
Upon this separate stick—

I made no entries here myself,

But I did, and made a clutch at my throat.

Each notch a thousand represents,

And a thousand prove fair this year,

We'll add about five more.

"We've always kept our busness square,

And straighter than a string;

Has not a man in the world

And no man a thing.

We've labored hard and well

For our country, and our wife,

And old age finds us happy and

Contented with our lot."

TEN TERRIBLE MINUTES.

One November evening, a few years ago I had occasion to travel from Canons street to Spa Road station, on the Southwester railway. It had been a cold, foggy day throughout, and there were comparatively few passengers.

The compartment which I entered—a second-class—had but one passenger, a stony-faced man of 50 or 60. He was attempting, with evidently small success, to read a book, and he flung about on his seat in rather a testy fashion.

Having a doubt as to the regularity of the trains on such an evening, I said, "I suppose this stops at Spa road?"

"Spa road! Of course it does," said this gentleman, with what I considered unnecessary emphasis. "All these trains stop at Spa road."

"Don't thank me, sir," he said, a moment later. "I only answered a simple question—a fool or madman could do that."

Here the train slowly moved off, and the speaker, whose face I had not yet seen, resumed his efforts to read, muttering now and again an impatient "Oh!"

When we reached the glass dome of the Borough market the train came to a stop, and for the first time I found myself in a position to obtain a good view of my fellow-passenger. Hitherto he had obstinately kept his back or shoulders toward me. Now he threw his volume down on the seat and faced about. He was not a man of middle age, but of a very ripe of life. Rather over the average height, he had the broad shoulders, full chest and nervous hands of an athlete. The impression which his features produced was decidedly unpleasant. Yet save for the eyes, which had a peculiar and indescribable glare in them, the face was not unhandsome one.

"I did not know that we were so close to the Crystal palace," he said brusquely.

"The Crystal palace!" I said, in some alarm. "We are not near the Crystal palace."

"The fog has affected your eyesight, my friend," was the reply. "Trouble yourself to look out of this window."

"Oh, that!" I said, smiling. "You like your joke, sir, I perceive. The Borough market must feel flattered, indeed, to be mistaken for the Sydenham palace."

"Borough market! Of course, it was only my joke," laughed my companion. "But there was no mirth in the laugh."

He now took up his book again and made another attempt to read. Though he fixed his eyes on the page and even now again turned a leaf, it was evident that his reading was little better than a pretense. Indeed, it was so dark in the carriage that we saw the small characters in an ordinary volume had become quite illegible. The train reached New Cross, and at the same moment we entered the station my companion, who had drawn nearer me, turned to his seat in the corner farthest from the platform. From this he gazed with evidently eager interest on the people passing and repassing the carriage door. As at Cannon street, the number of these was of great, and were still alone when the train again moved off.

The moment we were outside the station a change came over my fellow-passenger. He threw his book on the floor, and rose to his feet. Hitherto he had been preoccupied with my own thoughts, given small heed to him. Now, without knowing why, I felt myself assimilated. There was a light in his eyes, and an expression of his mouth, which at once arrested my attention. "Have you been much of a traveler?" he asked, suddenly. He was standing with his back to the door, watching me curiously.

"I have never been out of the island," I replied.

"Ah! he said. "I have been everywhere—Italy, Russia, India, China, Tius, Turkey, Ashante—anywhere—everywhere. I have been near the North pole and quite at the South."

"Indeed, he must be a very great traveler, sir," I said.

"I have never been to the moon. No man can be a great traveler who has not been there."

"Then I am afraid that, with the exception of those famous heroes of Jules Verne, there are very few about."

"Just so, just so! And yet a trip up above the detectable part for beyond the clouds would be enjoyable. In a night like this it would be peculiarly so; don't you agree with me?"

"Quite right," I said, "for my own part I'd much rather be at my fireside."

"You would, would you? Look at that, small that, taste that cursed fog." He threw open the window, and certainly the fog that poured in was bad enough in all conscience.

"I grant you it is not pleasant, either for eyes or throat," I said.

"I knew you would continue my silent companion. "Anybody would be glad to be out of it. The man who could free you from it would deserve your thanks, would he not?"

There was a light in the speaker's

eyes which I did not like, and a movement at the corners of his mouth, the opposite of pleasant. While I faced the least dread of him, I was yet not without a strong desire to reach Spa road. As bad luck would have it, while yet we had not made half the short journey, the train again came to a sudden stop.

"Yes, he would be a public benefactor who could deliver the people of London from fog," I said.

"He would, would he not?" whispered my companion eagerly. "Then I am the man."

As he spoke he crouched down and looked up at me with a glint that made me start. He was a man, I could pick up his sleeves, as he whispered again. "I am the man. I can free you from these fog—I can free myself."

"ARKANSAS" was originally spelled "Ark-an-see" and has always been pronounced "Arkansaw" by the old settlers.

The Suez canal is 100 miles in length. It is twenty-two feet wide at the bottom, about six feet at the surface, and twenty-six feet deep, easily passing the largest vessels.

There are about 17,000 locomotives running on the railroads of the United States, and 500,000 cars of all kinds.

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The Aryan languages are Sanskrit, whence Hindostan; Zend, whence Persian; Greek, whence Roman; Latin, whence Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Welsh, etc. Celts, whence Teutonic, Irish, Gothic; Slavonic, whence Scandinavian, Russian and Austr.-Polish.

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The average duration of vitality in seeds of some of our cultivated plants is as follows: Artichoke, 5 years; broad bean, 6; beet root, 5; cabbage, 2; carrot, 4; cucumber, 5; lettuce, 5; maize, 2; melon, 5; onion, 2; parsnip, 2; peas, 4 or 5; radish, 5; spinach, 5; tomato, 5; turnip, 5; egg plant, 7; endive, 9; potato, 3; strawberry, 3.

The expression "A 1" popularly used to designate the fineness of articles, such as the symbols of the British and foreign shipping-list of the Lloyd's. "A" is used to designate the character or conditions of the hull of a vessel, and the figure "1" to denote the efficient state of her anchors, cables and stores. If those are insufficient in quantity or quality, the figure "2" is used to indicate the same. When it is said of a ship, "she is A 1," it means that she is fit to haul rigging and equipment.

"Your balloon would scarcely travel on such a night," I said, with affected indifference. "The atmosphere is too thick!"

"Too thick! Do you think so?" he said.

"I do. Consider the density of the fog. How can we possibly get through?"

"Well, there's something in that," he said, sitting down. "Yet the effort is worth a trial. Yes, it is worth a trial."

He sprang anew to his feet, and approached me with a clutch at my throat.

"This is how we begin, this is how I get the gas for the trip. I kill you first to give you start. Then I start myself and follow you." One short I gave for him to help, but it was lost in the report of a fog signal; then we were swaying back and forward in the carriage in a struggle which was literally for life or death. The madman's breath came hot from his mouth, and his strong arms held me in a fierce embrace. There was a fierce joy in his eyes.

The foam worked out of his mouth, and his teeth gnashed angrily against each other.

Life is dear, and I felt no inclination to kill mine without a desperate struggle. I took my antagonist's hands from my throat, and for a moment forced him to act on his own behalf. I shouted again for help, but the maniac seemed to be held, but it was lost in the report of a fog signal; then we were swaying back and forward in the carriage in a struggle which was literally for life or death. The madman's breath came hot from his mouth, and his strong arms held me in a fierce embrace. There was a fierce joy in his eyes.

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